

THE HILLS OF  
HOME by Lauchlan  
Maclean WATT & the  
four Pentland Essays by  
R. L. STEVENSON



Class PR 5494

Book .U13











## THE HILLS OF HOME



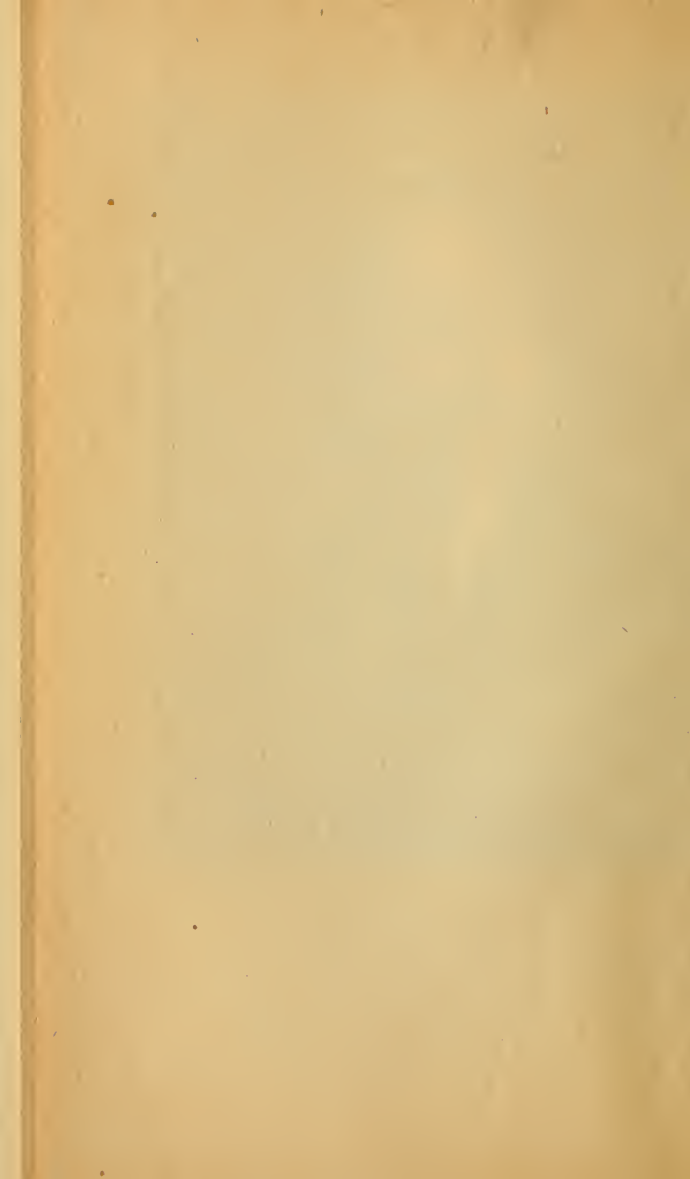




ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON







# THE HILLS OF H O M E

BY L. MACLEAN WATT

WITH THE PENTLAND ESSAYS OF

ROBERT LOUIS

STEVENSON

AN OLD SCOTCH GARDENER

THE MANSE: A PASTORAL

AND THE PENTLAND RISING

TWELVE ILLUSTRATIONS IN COLOUR

BY ROBERT HOPE, A.R.S.A.



NEW YORK:  
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

1914

PR 5494

V/3

12340

14/2



*Turnbull & Spears, Printers, Edinburgh, Great Britain*

H. B. Sep. 29, 14

# LIST OF CONTENTS

## THE HILLS OF HOME

CHAPTER ONE . . . . .	<i>page</i> 15
CHAPTER TWO . . . . .	29
CHAPTER THREE . . . . .	41
CHAPTER FOUR . . . . .	49
CHAPTER FIVE . . . . .	59
CHAPTER SIX . . . . .	87
CHAPTER SEVEN . . . . .	101
CHAPTER EIGHT . . . . .	115
CHAPTER NINE . . . . .	133

## PENTLAND ESSAYS

I. A PASTORAL . . . . .	147
II. AN OLD SCOTCH GARDENER . . . . .	167
III. THE MANSE . . . . .	185
IV. THE PENTLAND RISING . . . . .	203
I. THE CAUSES OF THE REVOLT . . . . .	207
II. THE BEGINNING . . . . .	215
III. THE MARCH OF THE REBELS . . . . .	223
IV. RULLION GREEN . . . . .	235
V. A RECORD OF BLOOD . . . . .	245



# LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

*From pictures by*

ROBERT HOPE, A.R.S.A.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON . . . . . *frontispiece*

SWANSTON COTTAGE . . . . . *page 16*

“When years have come it casts a more  
endearing light upon the past.”

SWANSTON VILLAGE—SPRING . . . . . 32

“Each new impression only deepens the  
sense of nationality and the desire of native  
places.”

FROM ABOVE SWANSTON COTTAGE . . . . . 64

“The sea-beholding city in the plain.”

WINTER ON THE PENTLANDS . . . . . 96

“A bitter air that took you by the throat,  
unearthly harpings of the wind along the  
moors.”

THATCHED COTTAGE—SWANSTON VILLAGE . 128

“I think I owe my taste for that hill busi-  
ness rather to the art and interest of John  
Tod.”

JOHN TOD . . . . . 152

“Had been all his days faithful to that  
curlew-scattering, sheep-collecting life.”

THE GARDEN—SWANSTON COTTAGE . . . 168

“In flowers his taste was old-fashioned  
and catholic.”

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

THE MANSE . . . . .	<i>page</i> 184
“A certain water-door, embosomed in shrubbery.”	
COLINTON—OLD MILL . . . . .	200
“The river is there dammed back for the service of the old flour-mill.”	
RULLION GREEN . . . . .	216
“On the summit of the bare heathery spur of the Pentlands.”	
THE PENTLANDS, NEAR RULLION GREEN . . . . .	248
“In sooth that scene was fair.”	



## NOTE

THE Three Essays, "Pastoral," "An Old Scotch Gardener," and "The Manse," contained in this volume, are reprinted by arrangement with Messrs Chatto & Windus, Ltd.



## THE HILLS OF HOME



# THE HILLS OF HOME

## BY L. MACLEAN WATT

### CHAPTER

### ONE

**I**T IS A THING WHICH CANNOT be understood by the dwellers in fertile plains—how hearts should ever learn to cling with love to the remembrance of frowning mountains, bare grey crags, and stormy headlands beaten about by the wind, and the rain, and the tumbling surf of the sea. Yet, that the thought of these does possess and dominate the lives of certain peoples with an abiding passion is testified alike by history and by literature.

All mountain folks have been patriots, because the mountains have been, in every age, the haven, the fortress, and bulwark of liberty. The very ruggedness of a land was an asset of its national independence. Hence the love men bear for their Fatherland is naturally intensified in those last retreats of most precious human interests. Indeed, battle for anything enhances its

## THE HILLS OF HOME

value in the eyes of those who have to struggle for the possession of it. This undoubtedly very largely explains the tender pride which the Swiss and the Scots feel for their native mountains. The ranks of invading enemies have been rolled back down their slopes like spent waves. They vindicated their right to them in the blood of their race.

“Scotia, my dear, my native soil”—that expresses the personal possession-right of a man to the land of his birth and upbringing, the prime result of his grapple for liberty. Retention, in spite of assault and violence, made each glen and hill, each hamlet and graveyard, very deeply precious. Yet, up to modern times, the hills were largely set about with fear and awe. In fact, in medieval and later Scotland a ridge, a ravine or a rushing stream was the border-limit of the possession of a clan, to cross which was to venture upon opposition, wrangle, and the risk of death. The advent









THE HOUSE AT LITTLE FORT

Painted by W. J. L. 1861. The house is now a ruin.



## THE HILLS OF HOME

of peaceful days, and the passing of ancient habits of language and life awoke, developed, and deepened the spirit of romance. The genius and patriotism of Sir Walter Scott especially gave voice and meaning to this. Fading things were clothed with the glamour which dying gives to them, and men began to move lovingly amongst the glens, and dream beside meandering burns. The crumbling ruin on the crag became a centre of poetic thought; the selfishness, oppression, cruelty, murder, and lust which had disgraced it being forgotten.

Scotland can, from the very variety of her configuration and character, very freely meet the patriotic wants of all her varied people; for her landscape ranges from plain to crag, from silent moor to sobbing sea, from desolate upland to sunny harvest-field and placid lake. It is Fatherland! And that is a spell which has quickened tears even in strong men's hearts. I have known a handful of white sand, from the shore of a

## THE HILLS OF HOME

Highland loch four thousand miles away,  
treasured through three generations, from  
the morning long ago when the exiles turned  
to take a final look at the lone waters  
that they loved. Years ago, an old High-  
lander, speaking to me, expressed in epi-  
gram this secret of Scotland and the Scot-  
tish nature, when he told me that what  
clasped his long life in a sweet complete-  
ness were his faith in God, and his being  
still in the place where he had been born.  
Religion and patriotism are undoubtedly  
the cords that bind us as a people. The  
nation that has within it the love of country  
and the love of God has the indomitable  
note of true and lasting life. This set at  
the back of all our strife the key of abiding  
victory. Men of our race were content to  
toil in windy fields, fighting, baffled often,  
on reluctant hillsides, coaxing corn-patches  
out of rugged moors, because they loved  
their land, and because they believed that  
God remembers honest labour and rewards

## THE HILLS OF HOME

the struggle of true hearts. This is the fact behind that remembrance of native land which haunts the exile from the fields of home. He may forget. Softly as the silting sand that blows in from the desert, the dust of the years may settle between his heart and the home afar. But, ere he lies down to die, some voice, like the sound of a bell borne through the dark to a ship at sea, some verse of an old song his mother sang, will wake memory from her sleep. He will see again the old land of home—he will hear again the cry of the wind among the crags, and the voices of his own people calling to him, Come home to your own folks before you die! For a man cannot escape his race. A man cannot hush the call of the blood though he heap himself around with comforts, though he win whatever the world can give him, though he bar the door of his heart against the dreams that visit him. Old memories draw the curtain. He sees again grey peaks against the sky, the scattered

## THE HILLS OF HOME

hamlet clinging above the shingly bay; and the salt spray of Hebridean seas is blown among his hair. There never was a true man yet but felt this to be true, remembering his lost youth, down behind the years.

Now, through almost all the thoughts and words of Robert Louis Stevenson these truths run like an undertone. The story of his country's struggle for freedom and for faith impressed his heart deeply. Cosmopolitan though he became, he loved most of all the city of his birth, and though he loved all high places, yet most deeply spoke to him the environing hills of his childhood, "the hills of home," the wind among the trees on their lonely slopes, the voice of running waters in their woodlands, the song of blackbirds and the rapture of the larks.

The Pentland Hills, so accessible from the Edinburgh pavements, yet intimately known to comparatively few of her citizens,



## THE HILLS OF HOME

appealed to Stevenson by their quiet, by their pensive dignity, by their historic and poetic associations, by their influence on the lives of those whose acquaintance he made when he went to live beneath the shadow of Kirk Yetton, by the variety in the sunshine and cloud of their day-time, and by the spell of the thought of their loneliness in the night, vocal with the ghostly cry of restless wind and falling water.

These feelings he expressed most charmingly in the verses, the second of which appeared in the dedication of his *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*:

Bells upon the city are ringing in the night;  
High above the gardens are the houses full of light;  
On the heathy Pentlands is the curlew flying free;  
And the broom is blowing bonnie in the north  
    countrie.

Wecannae break the bonds that God decreed to bind,  
Still we'll be the children of the heather and the wind;  
Far away from home, O, it's still for you and me  
That the broom is blowing bonnie in the north  
    countrie!

## THE HILLS OF HOME

At the foot of the craggy face of Kirk Yetton shelters the little village of Swanston, a clachan "in the woody fold of a green hill," with some thatched cottages near by. Beside the burn, encircled by sweet trees, is Swanston Cottage, for ever associated with the remembrance of the delicate youth whose creative genius has written his name amongst the Scottish immortals, and at the same time has given him a grip on the affections of the world.

The view from Kirk Yetton was very precious to him; and somewhere in the hollow of those hills Allan Ramsay set the ideal scene of his *Gentle Shepherd*, though more than one site has contended for the honour of being the poet's *Habbie's Howe*. The vicinity of Carlops makes the strongest claim, and the poet's genius has created and coloured the geography of the neighbourhood, scattering it with "Patie's Hill" and "Patie's Mill," "Peggy's Lea" and "Jenny's Brae," &c.

## THE HILLS OF HOME

These Pentland "hills of home," so dear to Stevenson, are thus the real source of that interest in the lonely places and the lives remote in pastoral glens of Scotland which reached its climax in Sir Walter Scott, and through him became an integral part of Scottish thought. The pastoral landscape appealed to Ramsay. He did not incorporate in his picture anything of the sublime majesty of frowning precipice and misty corrie. His time was not yet ready for the appreciation of such things. But it had—almost without knowing it till Ramsay made it feel how wearisome it had become—grown tired of the garden convention which had come down as a bit of the poetic stage scenery from the older poets; and men, especially the jaded town folks, were glad to be led out into the green glades and sunny moorlands so near, yet for so long remote from their acquaintance. Besides giving an impetus to the literary expression of the charm of

## THE HILLS OF HOME

"the hills of home," Ramsay's work, in moving David Allan, in 1788, to depict the scenes of *The Gentle Shepherd*, awakened an art interest in native landscapes. Montgomerie, in the sixteenth century, had noted the charm of banks and braes, with the multitudinous life of undisturbed places; and very striking had been his pioneer view of wild Nature, especially in the rocky scaur, the rushing cascade, and the singing stream. But his was a picture of loneliness—Nature in solitude, except for the poet's responsive heart:

As I musèd mine alane,  
I saw ane river rin  
Out oore ane craggy rock of stane,  
Syne lighted in ane lin,  
With tumbling and rumbling  
Among the rockis round,  
Dewalling and falling  
Into that pit profound.

To hear thae startling stremis clear,  
Methought it music to the ear.

In Ramsay, however, the gentler moods

## THE HILLS OF HOME

of the Pentlands, the purling stream singing its song of Nature's childhood, the waterfall, the greensward, the folds of sheep, are viewed as the setting of innocent pastoral life, and as things to be lovingly brought into intimate friendliest touch with human loves and aspirations of every-day existence and labour, the elements and ingredients of primary poesy. He sees these things with a clean eye.

Gae farer up the burn to Habbie's How,  
Where a' the sweets of spring and summer grow;  
Between twa birks, out o'er a little lin,  
The water fa's and makes a singin' din;  
A pool breast-deep beneath as clear as glass,  
Kisses with easy whirls the bord'ring grass.

This was, of course, the fullest possible extent of acquaintance with such scenes that the debonair townsman could achieve. He was too corpulent, besides, to win access into the wilder solitudes, amid the mist-haunted grimnesses of frowning mountain recesses.

## THE HILLS OF HOME

Burns truly touched the characteristics of Ramsay's limitations when he wrote—

In gowany glens thy burnie strays  
Where bonnie lasses bleach their claes;  
Or trots by hazelly shaws and braes  
    Wi' hawthorns grey,  
Where blackbirds join the shepherd lays  
    At close o' day.

The influence of the Pentlands in literature is therefore a recordable fact.

There are other interests besides Ramsay's. The little village of Wester Howgate, in touch with the range, has an affectionate place in human memory through the exquisitely written tale, by Doctor John Brown, of *Rab and His Friends*. Every year, too, the anniversary of Rullion Green is celebrated by an open-air service, where thousands of people meet in huge conventicle. The old names themselves have still an appeal within them. Windy Gowl, Cauldstane Slap—their very sound has an eerie sough.

The hills are intersected by droveroads,

## THE HILLS OF HOME

now long since forsaken by the great flocks of sheep creeping onwards to the Southern markets. Many an adventure occurred upon these in the old droving days; robbery and murder sometimes invaded the quiet places. Gypsies, shepherds, and lonely men have had their adventures, unrecorded, deep in the quiet heart of those green hills. Judgment Day will see some strange uprisings there.

It was natural, therefore, that this youth with the literary hunger in his heart, with eye and ear keenly open to the beauties of Nature and the experiences of men, should find much to interest and enthrall him in such an environment. The natural exit for his thought in this connection was the Essay, and he used that form of utterance as a medium of word painting and portraiture, whereby the landscape of his childhood and his young manhood became re-peopled with the old minister, the old gardener, and the old shepherd, and with

## THE HILLS OF HOME

memories of the persecuted hill-folk,  
marching through the mist and the driv-  
ing hail to death for the faith  
of their fathers.



THE MODERN ESSAY, as a form of composition, sprang out of the Character Sketch. The Character

Sketch was too objective to meet the desire of expressing personal opinions, and it did not provide for desultory comment on affairs in general. Men in the sixteenth century were entering into the habit of jotting down their opinions. A habit of keeping Common-place Books, wherein a man's thoughts became methodically arranged, led to the custom of thinking on paper; and these things were circulated among friends. The name *Essay* was taken from Montaigne to cover the product. That word sufficiently expressed what the thing was meant for, namely, an informal attempt towards the utterance of thought. It was considered to be an avenue of personal opinion. In its pages the thinker spoke in the first person. It was even the convention to look

## THE HILLS OF HOME

upon them as having been put together for the author's private use. Lord Bacon, by the publication of his *Essays* in 1597, established a model, for the English essayist, which has not been transcended. The Essay remained for a while as a vehicle of worldly wisdom—a select gathering of notes and maxims; and gradually worked its way into recognition as an established branch of literature. Bacon set the mark of its style as an instrument of concise phrase and refined and polished thought, which he uses as the envelope of quotations and illustrations drawn from his own wide and varied reading in the Scriptures, in the classics, in Machiavelli and Montaigne; while all science, as known in his time, is utilized to elucidate his views on life. He looked upon his *Essays* in the light of their title, namely, as things which were not meant to be anything else but the passing expression of opinions, the spontaneous utterance of his own beliefs and thoughts.

## THE HILLS OF HOME

The Essay method was applied by Felltham, "a kind of Bacon in holy orders," to religious topics. Its utility was widely recognized, and it became an established medium of literary expression, evoking in modern times the most interesting utterance of men's most intimate thought. From its nature, therefore, it admitted of as much variety in utterance and point of view as there was human character behind the making of it. It may "perhaps be styled the sonnet of prose writing. . . Brevity being its mark, it may be a vehicle of gentle humour, clean and polished wit, tabloided thought, and pregnant suggestion."\* Sir Thomas Browne, Dryden, and Cowley used it with a masterly power. It was the genius of Addison and Steele, however, that, in *The Spectator*, fixed the Essay as a popular English literary form. A vast impetus was given to its cultivation, and Johnson's *Rambler* and *Idler*, along with

\* *Literature and Life*, by L. MacLean Watt.

## THE HILLS OF HOME

Goldsmith's *Bee* and *Citizen of the World*, bridged the gulf between the opalesques of Addison and Steele and the poignant humanity of *Elia*. Alexander Smith, the almost forgotten author of *A Life Drama*, presented, in his *Dreamthorp*, his thoughts upon literature and life, in the form of carefully polished and refined essay, using it as a vehicle of passing emotional impressions of humanity, manners, and emotions, characters and customs. In the hands of Macaulay, Arnold, and Carlyle it became a medium of criticism, expressing the author's views on the principles of Art, and Literature, in fact almost the pamphlet of a reviewer.

Of modern men none have come nearer to the earlier masterpieces in the art of the Essay than Robert Louis Stevenson. His essays were extremely personal, and, in this respect, indeed, excelled their kind, while they displayed intimate acquaintance with all that had gone before in the





## THE HILLS OF HOME

hands of the master-craftsmen. He knows the dialect of his trade, yet his own accent and his own point of view lift him above the imputation of plagiarism and imitation.

His methods of work followed his ideals of writing. A good thing has to grow slowly. It cannot be pushed.

"Do you imagine," he says, in protest, to a kindly correspondent, "that I could write an essay a month, or promise an essay even every three months? . . . The essays must fall from me, essay by essay, as they ripen." They were to be the full fruitage of his soul, not the trivial expression of a passing moment.

Yet Stevenson's notion of what an essay was, expressed in his own words, did not rise quite so high as that, but as being contributions towards "a friendlier and more thoughtful way of looking about one. . . . You know my own description of myself as a person with a poetic character and no poetic talent: just as my prose

## THE HILLS OF HOME

muse has all the ways of a poetic one, and I must take my Essays as they come to me."

His psychological insight, unique in its depths of piercing and passionate vision, was an early possession of his own. As when, a mere child, he said to his mother, "Mamma, I have drawn a man. Shall I draw his soul now?" His sympathy, too, could speak with a touch that arrested the breath in one's throat, as when he tells how, in one of his nights of early ill-health, his mother lifted him up out of bed, and showed him two or three windows still lit-up in Queen Street, "where also, we told each other, there might be sick little boys and their nurses, waiting, like us, for the morning."

He was deeply fond of history. Brave episodes of life and struggle appealed to the imaginative side of his nature. Especially was he moved by the history of his country, in the dark days of the persecu-



## THE HILLS OF HOME

tion of the Presbyterian faith, that form of faith so suitable to "the hills of home," an amalgam of sternness and love, like the environing landscapes which were the theatre of its manifestations. Nevertheless, he was catholic in the truest sense. His love for Edinburgh, and the combination of meadow, woodland, and mountain in which it is set, was pathetically faithful and abiding, although she behaved to him like a step-mother. The same contradictions which appeared in most things that appealed to him, appeared also in this love of his for the ecclesiastical history of his country; for the sunshine of his nature, in combination with the Bohemianism of his character, made him revolt, at certain seasons, against hard dogmas in its creed. Besides, he would really have found the way to heaven wearisome walking continually with the saints. The variety of the road in the other direction, with the company therein, sometimes appealed to him

## THE HILLS OF HOME

with a freshness and a tang quite his own.

His extreme impatience of convention led him, of course, to be greatly misunderstood, perhaps most of all by his own father, whose conventional orthodoxy he declared to be something like a belief that "this life was a shambling sort of omnibus which was taking him to his hotel." To himself, the clockwork world seemed so ridiculous! It was a weariness "to see people skipping all round us, with their eyes sealed up with indifference, knowing nothing of the earth, or man, or woman, going automatically to offices, and they are happy or unhappy out of a sense of duty, I suppose, surely at least from no sense of happiness or unhappiness, unless perhaps they have a tooth that twinges. Is it not like a bad dream? Why don't they stamp their foot upon the ground and awake?"

One can trace the seeking of his soul after some kind of spiritual rest, and find-

## THE HILLS OF HOME

ing it, not in dogmatic utterances, but in general conclusions. Sometimes one suspects that he is groping after faith to oblige his father, and to make the old man forget the bitter arguments they have shared on the subject. Still, one must feel him to be honest when he says:

“Strange as it may seem to you, everything has been, in one way or the other, bringing me a little nearer to what I think you would like me to be. ’Tis a strange world, indeed, but there is a manifest God for those who care to look for Him.”

At the same moment his postscript explains his position. The perverse pixie acknowledges his fault:

“While I am writing gravely, let me say one word more. I have taken a step towards more intimate relations with you. But don’t expect too much of me. Try to take me as I am. This is a rare moment, and I have profited by it; but take it as a rare moment. Usually I hate to speak of

## THE HILLS OF HOME

what I really feel, to that extent that when I find myself cornered, I have a tendency to say the reverse."

He is beginning to see the fundamental earnestness of life, and he feels convinced that every man should leave a Bible behind him if he is unable to leave a jest book. "I feel fit to leave nothing but my benediction." He left it truly in his words that so often are like still music, in his look over the shadow-threshold of the Unseen, in some of his verse, haunting in its pathetic truth, and fruited melody, in the strength which out of his frequent weakness makes for the uplifting of stronger men, down, sometimes, on their faces, in sorrow or in failure, or in fruitless questionings in the sawdust ring of the circus we call life.

It is, indeed, much to talk with one who has gone through the campaign, lain stricken in the trenches with bleeding wounds, and heard the onward-moving feet of the

## THE HILLS OF HOME

crowd passing above and around him. The load that irks our own shoulders; and the ache in our own hearts are uplifted and assuaged when we know how weaker and sadder men learned to endure, and to triumph and be strong.



THERE WAS SOME-  
thing brave in his writing,  
worthy of the lighthouse  
building stock to which he  
belonged. His grandfather had not fitted  
up the Bell-Rock lighthouse for nought.  
His father's moodishness gave colour to  
his child's feelings, and there was much  
in the memories of the Manse, in which  
some of his childhood was spent, beside  
the Water of Leith at Colinton, where his  
grandfather, old Doctor Balfour, so long  
ministered. Men might have chosen to-day  
another site, certainly not in the flat be-  
tween the parish graveyard and the river;  
but they could never have selected a more  
romantic or more poetic stance. Out of the  
bedroom windows the belfry, the home  
of white-winged pigeons, may be seen,  
under the shadow of which the fathers of  
the hamlet sleep; the dust of poor men and  
women creeping in close to the shelter of

## THE HILLS OF HOME

the great ones of the parish. The graveyard of a place like that becomes the real "Who's Who" of the men who gave of their means, and the men who gave of their labour for the up-building of a community for God within sound of the running river singing seaward through the trees—a river of mills, all speaking of honest industry, beating and pulsing with honest thought.

The village has become now a place of villas, where the dry lungs of city folk may expand under the clean breath of the hills. In Stevenson's day it was a dreamy hamlet—the churchyard a veritable Garden of Sleep; while the long grasses, daisy-starred, were a fringe like a benediction between the faces of the dead and the staring eye of the world's day. The Manse plane is a dreamy hollow still. Under its windows the river flows, now fretted into passion music by boulders that obstruct its passage to the sea, now floating through soul-moving silences of great deep shad-



## THE HILLS OF HOME

owy pools. There are messages from the mountains in it for the children of the plains. To the imaginative boy the high bank of cliff and scaur, up which climb the wind-stirred trees, was as the border of the skies, yet with the imaginative tincture of a world beyond touching its lofty margin of greenery. His heart went back long pilgrimages out of manhood to that place of running waters, with whose song once mingled the evening psalm of the Covenanters in the snow-covered kirkyard, on their last bivouac before death for the grim and stern faith that was drawing them on to lonely Rullion Green. It must have seemed, and especially to a heart touched by the emotions of the ancient religion of the Hebrew shot through with the grey sunshine of Scottish skies, a dwelling-place of God, in which

The sparrow findeth out  
An house wherein to rest,  
The swallow also for herself  
Hath purchased a nest,—

## THE HILLS OF HOME

the flash of sunshine on the wings of doves being almost the token of angelic presences.

That old place, secluded and remote, yet spoke of wide-world pilgrimages to him in whose heart was the call of the mystic flautist that plays always to the children of our race the captivating call, "Over the hills and far away!" For there were lines of communication from it to the ends of the world; and the heavy-footed post-carrier, in his coarse and common satchel, bore to and fro messages with strange foreign names.

One finds this reflected as in a magic plate in his Essay on the Manse, wherein he passes a loving hand across the mirror of remembrance, his touch reviving pictures that are fading, and pictures that have been forgotten quite, love bringing to light a type of Scottish clergyman no longer moving now through Assemblies of the Church. There scarce can be to-day

## THE HILLS OF HOME

the kind of study like that wherein the old man sat. The library of a parson of to-day is different, with a wide world's differences, from that which was marshalled on the old man's shelves. Even the kindly grace, the dignity which was the peculiar property of a courtier of the King of Kings, has given place to the preciseness of men of affairs, who have to run their parishes like business establishments. The day of quiet dreams is past for most Scottish manses. Shoe-leather, stair climbing, finance, the face-to-face-ness of intimate acquaintance with social problems of the poor and the unclean, are in the forefront of the methods of the ecclesiastic of to-day. Parochial religion is as practical a thing as life and fire insurance. Not, of course, that it has lost the inspiring necessity of divine grace laid upon it from the beginning; but much of the simple sweetness of its externals has for ever passed away. Nevertheless, the old place between the

## THE HILLS OF HOME

running waters and the Garden of Sleep, which is as a deep still pool on this side of eternity, remains practically the same; and, to the heart of R. L. Stevenson, it always remained as a holy nook of memory, whither recurred his soul's best dreamings.

Looking through the past, he loved to trace the residuum of inheritance which he had received into his own heart from the old minister—"a love of talk, a love of teaching, a love of nuts and port and porter." "I would rise," said he, "from the dead, to preach!" Though he could not tabulate all he felt, the presence of ancient influences "in the very knot and centre of his present life and experience" made him as though he kept step with the stride of the past; and the mixed blood of border fighter, of Jacobite smuggler, of deep-sea sailor, and of brave hearts that struggled in the salt foam to fix up guiding lights for mariners, gave a measure to the pulse-beat of his own.

## THE HILLS OF HOME

There is a great deal to be reckoned with in the rock from which we are hewn. It is difficult to get one's feet clear of the entanglements of race which cling about our early years, and the stories of what men of our blood have done, whispered above us when we were little more than out of our cradles. The Scottish heart especially lingers among such things. They are the very last to be shaken off from its remembrance. The power of ancestor-remembering is the history-making power in the Scottish folk-legend. It had a special appeal to the mind of Stevenson. The Essay on the Manse is full of it. The old place was to him a house of ghosts. The stairs creaked under steps that had a haunting familiarity in their footfall. Indeed, his heart was haunted, and the windows of it crowded with faces tantalizingly reminiscent of family portraits hung in dusty rooms.



THE INFLUENCE OF his ancestry, and the serious-mindedness of his parents very naturally turned his thought towards the entrancement of the Covenant.

As the result of his reading on the matter of the religious persecutions in Scotland his *Pentland Rising, A Page of History*, 1666, was written, and was published anonymously as a small green pamphlet, issued by Andrew Elliot, Edinburgh. His imagination was deeply stirred by the sufferings of his countrymen, by their indomitable courage and fearlessness in the face of death. He always loved the peasantry, and, with that genial instinct of genius, was drawn by sympathy and admiration to the cause of the common people. His heart must have been moved to read of his namesake, John Stevenson of Cumreggan, one of the survivors of

## THE HILLS OF HOME

Pentland, who wrote *A Rare Soul-strengthening Cordial*, and who, like all men that have passed through a soul-crisis, instinctively touched true style, as when he said, "Many a night have I lain with pleasure in the churchyard of Old Dailly, and made a grave my pillow."

Wodrow, whose page was a pleasure to Stevenson, and yet also a weariness, with its footnotes, proclamations, and Acts of Parliament, recorded the shooting of another Stevenson, who was in a small company surprised at prayer in Minnigaff by the notorious Colonel James Douglas, Lieutenant Livingstone, and Cornet Douglas.

There was much in the Pentland episode to stir the imagination and catch the fancy. The Covenanters, goaded to a corporate protest, seven hundred people, roused at Dalry, marched on towards Edinburgh, under Wallace of Achans, an old campaigner of the Civil Wars, who had been



## THE HILLS OF HOME

Lieutenant-Colonel of the Foot Guards, and who, by constant drill and discipline, did his best upon the way to stiffen his peasant forces for the fight which he felt certain would be thrown across their path. A terrible storm lashed them as they moved over the wild country round Cumnock, but Wallace defied the storm, though it winnowed his ranks of some who were not weather-proof. Strong and resolute, however, he allowed nothing to hinder his march; and sheltered his rabble in St Bride's of Douglas, among the tombs of notable men of war. At Lanark they were one thousand strong, half of them mounted on rough farm horses. They pushed on by Bathgate, "through pitiable broken moores," not daring to lie down lest they should perish in the sleet, pressing forward, tied together lest they might fall out of the ranks in the darkness and storm. In Colinton churchyard, which lay covered with frosted snow, they made their biv-

## THE HILLS OF HOME

ouac. Disturbed by the Edinburgh Fencibles, they took to the Pentlands, lofty and austere in the November morning, swinging round by Dreghorn Castle, Woodhouselee, and Ingliston Bridge to Rullion Green, an ancient market stance on the south-east base of Turnhouse Hill, familiar to the drovers of the South, where many a ragged "rullion" had been gathered to the cattle trysts. Dalyell came on from Currie by the drove road between Capelaw and Bellshill, past Saint Catherine's Chapel, now hid beneath the Edinburgh water reservoir. The experienced eye of Wallace selected this for his desperate stand. A natural trench cut the old drove road, and overhead was the Turnhouse Hill, fifteen hundred feet high. West and south the green slopes rolled to the foot of Carnethy, while on the north the ground dropped three hundred feet in half a mile, towards the Castlelaw Hill, where the Glencorse burn "dreams

## THE HILLS OF HOME

and pours in cunning wimples in that glen."

The army of the Covenant had in it only sixty muskets, forty brace of pistols, and twenty pounds of loose powder, while Dalyell's three thousand were well-armed disciplined troops. A contemporary ballad scornfully recounts how

"Some had halbards; some had durks;  
Some had crooked swords like Turks;  
Some had slings, and some had flails  
Knit with eel and oxen tails;  
Some had spears and some had pikes;  
Some had spades which delvyt dykes;  
Some had guns with rusty ratches;  
Some had firey peats for matches;  
Some had bows but wanted arrows;  
Some had pistols without marrows;  
Some the coulter of a plough;  
Some had scyths men and horse to hough;  
And some with a Lochaber axe  
Resolved to give Dalyell his paiks."

A fight like that which ensued was fraught with imaginative power. It kindled imagination even in the rough men who, having passed through this struggle,

## THE HILLS OF HOME

wrote their ill-spelled letters about their experience. Drummond, for example, writing to Rothes, described the skirmish in a thumb-nail sketch. "They mixed," he says, "like chess-men in a bag." Rude though their weapons were, the hearts of the peasantry were pathetically staunch, and their scythes mounted on poles were terrible against the charges of the horsemen.

There were figures among them that would stand out from the most prosaic page, sure to catch Stevenson's eye—men like Captain Paton of Meadowhead—whose trenchant blade, notched with its dour battle work, may still be seen—a veteran who had fought in comradeship with Dalyell himself in the German wars, and who had gone through Kilsyth, Philiphaugh and Worcester. He and Dalyell knew each other's fighting weight. As Paton cut down trooper after trooper sent to kill him, he grimly cried, "Go home and

## THE HILLS OF HOME

tell your master I cannot come to sup with him to-night!" How Joab, the captain of David's host, would have loved a man like that! What a vindictive psalm he might have written.

A great mass of the defeated peasantry were captured and driven like cattle, to be penned like beasts in Greyfriars churchyard, in Edinburgh, while many found their last long bivouac on the green side of the Pentlands, where they had fought their final fight. "Next day," we are told, "the godly women of Edinburgh went out and buried in shrouds the dead who lay stricken on the bloody sward of Rullion Green."

Stevenson was caught, very naturally, by the thought of those men who had left the farm and the plough, and, with the very implements of their labour, scythes and flails, went out to die for their faith. The quiet hills seemed to speak to him of their stern resolve. His soul had grown

## THE HILLS OF HOME

up in the environment of a strongly Presbyterian house; and the romantic chivalry of his nature responded to the self-forgetfulness of the brave peasantry and landed gentry who had felt their patriotism bound up thus with their religion. Stevenson, much to the joy of his father, toiled on this episode, but he made it into a story, a method which did not meet with the approval of the domestic censor. He therefore wrote the small green-covered pamphlet; which, however, was soon afterwards bought in, as far as possible, by his father.

The simple suffering devotion of the Covenanters clung to his sympathy. The graves of the martyrs, scattered everywhere in quiet moors, in lonely places where they fell, gripped his fancy. Whenever he writes about them, his writing gains power by the spiritual transcript of the gaunt simplicity of the subject. Nothing needs to be added to lines like these:

## THE HILLS OF HOME

"We went up the stream a little further to where two Covenanters lie buried in an oakwood." The picture of an emotion stands therein clear and perfect.

The appeal of the persecuted remnant held sway over him to the end; and it was far away from home, that home which he was never to behold again, that he wrote to S. R. Crockett the three touching verses, instinct with pity for the outcast folk:

Blows the wind to-day, and the sun and the rain are  
flying,

Blows the wind on the moors to-day and now,  
Where about the graves of the martyrs the whaups  
are crying,

My heart remembers how!

Grey recumbent tombs of the dead in desert places,  
Standing stones on the vacant wine-red moor,  
Hills of sheep, and the homes of the silent vanished  
races,

And winds, austere and pure:

Be it granted me to behold you again in dying,  
Hills of home! and to hear again the call;

Hear about the graves of the martyrs the peewees  
crying,

And hear no more at all.

## THE HILLS OF HOME

It would be interesting to know how much of this was actually inspired by the lonely places which were the scenes of the struggles of the faithful, and which were the enfolding receptacle of their graves. The fact and its envelope made their appeal, often, together, to Stevenson's sensitive mind. Undoubtedly the solitude which was the arena of the conflict and the sacrifice of those simple courageous bands deepened the piteousness of their story, emphasizing their bitter outcasting. The grey wilderness became vibrant, for him, with their appeal for the recognition of the stern and terrible justice of their cause.



THE SCOTTISH MIND is indomitably moulded by the mountain, the desert and the sea, the three great influences which make for deep things in the heart. It is manifest that that trinity appealed immeasurably to Stevenson.

Yet love of Nature, and the recognition of the appeal of Scottish landscape to the soul, came late in the day; in fact, it is the characteristic of the modern spirit of Scottish Literature. One need not be astonished at that, if one remembers, alongside of it, the remarkable fact that, though we are a maritime race, it is only in modern times that even an anthology of sea poems could be compiled in our literature, which one would expect really to be full of sea-tangle and driftwood; while such a thing is impossible in connection with woodland and forest verse. Montgomerie, Scott and Hume, it is true, in the sixteenth century saw beau-

## THE HILLS OF HOME

ty in Nature; but not until Drummond of Hawthornden does that feeling find utterance in Scottish poetry again, and he passed it on as a growing thing to Allan Ramsay. There was love of country, undoubtedly, which sprang from the keenly awakened feeling for natural liberty; but the passion for the hills, the field and the stream, the communion with the spirit of the mountains, and the deep romantic love of lonely places, was essentially modern. A man loved the spot that gave him birth, the glen that sheltered him, or the town within whose walls his people had found protection, the streets and lanes in which he played with his earliest comrades; but, down till the eighteenth century, to the general mass of the poets and the great body of the people, the vast wild lonely places were looked upon with something like terror, when not with absolute repulsion. Burt, in his letters from the North, spoke of the hills as grisly and ugly, and "especially so

## THE HILLS OF HOME

when the heather was in bloom!" The man whose genius changed all that, clothing even the ragged caterans with the colours of romance, was Sir Walter Scott, who, by accentuating the charm of native scenery, wrote the deeper on the patriotic heart of the people the love of native land. Nevertheless, Drummond was unique in his time in discerning and expressing in his verse the still beauty of a lofty mountain covered with snow, an exquisite feature of a Scottish landscape, to which, perhaps, he had been educated through his travels abroad, when he had beheld the splendid colouring of the snow-crowned Alps. In this he was a pioneer.

Robert Louis Stevenson was, in these respects, a worthy son of his race; and, while he was a true child of Edinburgh, loving its plain stones with a filial affection, yet, the glamour of the hills, and especially of those which were near his native city, held him overmasteringly. When, there-

## THE HILLS OF HOME

fore, in 1867, his parents took a lease of Swanston Cottage, at the foot of Kirk Yetton, and he spent his time between Edinburgh and Swanston, the influences and associations of green hill and grey rock, of misty peak and quiet and still places, took a large part in the moulding of his thought and of the form of its expression.

Very early the love of Nature and of lonely places had possessed him, and led him away out of beaten tracks of conduct and of duty. He loved to play truant from school, and from the matter-of-fact discipline of lessons. The voice of Spring especially would call to his willing heart—

“Come with me over the hill so free,  
Where the winds are blowing,  
And the streams are flowing  
On to the shining sea.”

He was always for “Over the hills and far away,” at the very first impulse. The strain of Nature sang to him the Song of the Open Road, and his heart leapt to its measure.

## THE HILLS OF HOME

It was a suitable education, indeed, for a child like him. His truant hours were charged with inspiration. Indeed, the best school for such a spirit was the free field, and Nature was his best professor. The air of open places got into the breath of his vocabulary, and gave a spacious dignity of its own to his style. And yet, along with the spontaneity which is the grace of genius he brought into the creation of that style which was the expression of himself, the grace of industry. The acquisition of the art of writing was with him a work of piety and of labour. Without his wanderings over Kirk Yetton, Allermuir, Cauldstane Slap and the rest, his mind would have missed the free stride of its utterance. The very names appealed to him; and he passed on their glamour to generations of readers. Nor would he have been brought in contact with the mind and character of men like John Tod the Herd, and Robert Young the Gardener.

## THE HILLS OF HOME

His college days were not remarkable for that close attendance on lectures and assiduous devotion to note-taking which usually mark out a student for the respect of his Professors. His contemporaries did not, indeed, gauge his qualities as a whole. Some fell short altogether. I have actually heard one who was with him in the Speculative Society say that some of them never really listened to any paper he wrote; and, far more clearly than his appearances in a discussion, recalled the occasion on which he turned up driving a cab, which, because he was late, he had boldly seized on the stance, leaving the open-mouthed vociferous cabman helplessly gazing after him. I do not know the name of the friend who was brave enough to drive the cab back, and leave it among the ruins of Jehu's vocabulary. His was surely the bolder half of the adventure.

While the sound of the sea, and the glamour of the hills everywhere appealed









WHITE HOUSE, COTTAGE  
ON THE LAKE, 1880



## THE HILLS OF HOME

to his Scottish heart, men appealed to him also, through the same mental channel. Knox, "strong, salient, and worthy," Scoto-Hebraic, religio-political prophet and pioneer of so much that is great in his native land, especially in educational organization; Hume and Burns, with Scott, "the ever delightful man sane, courageous, admirable," as he designated him, these were shadows that spoke to him strongly out of the past.

It is interesting to see how Nature impressed him through channels of native influence, wherein religion, like a ghost, never far away from the heels of any Scotsman, coloured his view; as when he wrote from Wick of the storm he beheld there, in which the spray rose eighty feet above the new pier. "I stood a long while on the cope watching the sea below me. . . . I hear its dull monotonous roar at this moment below the shrieking of the wind, and there came ever recurring to my mind

## THE HILLS OF HOME

the verse I am so fond of—

‘But yet the Lord that is on high  
Is more of might by far  
Than noise of many waters is  
Or great sea billows are.’”

Edinburgh, of course, spoke to him with power equal, perhaps, to that of the hills. That fair city—about which everything that is good has been said, frequently so badly because no words can express the charm, material and spiritual, of the grey Scottish capital, with the peak of Arthur’s Seat looking down the alleys, watching the crowded houses; with the cry of the bugles at the castle; and the power of that poem in stone-and-lime up on the moss-grown rock, the throne of kings of old—held his heart until the end. Its appeal is, of course, unique, with its view of the Forth, and the Highland hills, from its very streets.

“After all,” he writes, “new countries, sun, music, and all the rest, can never take

## THE HILLS OF HOME

down our gusty, rainy, smoky, grim old city out of the first place that it has been making for itself in the bottom of my soul, by all pleasant and hard things that have befallen me for these past twenty years or so. My heart is buried there—say, in Advocate's Close!"

And once more he writes—

"Harkening I heard again  
In my precipitous city, beaten bells  
Winnow the keen sea wind."

He had the memorizing eye of the artist, which carries away in one glance all that it sees, and which appeals, as though with visual music, to the heart. One sees that, in his letter to Crockett, where he speaks of Glencorse Kirk—the quiet cruciform structure which figures in *Weir of Hermiston*. "Do you know where the road crosses the burn under Glencorse Church? Go there, and say a prayer for me: *moriturus salutat*. See that it's a sunny day; I would like it to be a Sunday,

## THE HILLS OF HOME

but that's not possible in the premises; and stand on the right-hand bank just where the road goes down into the water, and shut your eyes, and if I don't appear to you! well, it can't be helped, and will be extremely funny."

On his return from the South of Europe in 1874 he went to live at Swanston. The shadow of the Pentlands, and the sunshine drifting along their slopes, again moved about his life. In May the sleet was on the hills, for Swanston sits six hundred feet above the sea. He reclined there, quaffing the caller air. The high wintry wind, the grey sky, the clamour of blackbirds, "the bleating of sheep being shorn in a field near the garden," the gold coming out upon the whins, the great trailing flight of crows "passing continually between the wintry leaden sky and the wintry cold-looking hills," these made up the enviroing picture of his soul's life at Swanston. Here he worked, and worked

## THE HILLS OF HOME

hard, striving ever after Literature, the purest, truest utterance of the best things and thoughts—seeking, beyond Journalism, the finer essences, the higher embodiment of the essential soul. Here he developed a gospel—though his body was decrepit he seeks for cheer, and finds it by crowding hypochondria out of his life with the work whereby he fills it. “Nothing, indeed, but work all day long, except a short walk alone on the cold hills, and meals, and a couple of pipes with my father in the evening.”

His walks among the hills uplifted and solemnized his outlook, bringing him into contact with the heart of Nature, and with the striking, deeply sober originality of the grave men who herded sheep in lonely places, companioning with Thought—men whose brooding isolation kept their souls apart from overcrowding talk, until that uniqueness of view and expression which the world calls Originality, with

## THE HILLS OF HOME

quaintness frequent beneath its cloak, grew up within their hearts and moved upon their lips.

Swanston was for him a place of miscellaneous reading, working, and thinking. *The Trial of Joan of Arc*, *Paston Letters*, *Basin* the French historian, *Boswell*, *Pilgrim's Progress*, and the book of wild, tumultuous, gusty Nature, were his library there. And his fancy peopled its environment with the crowd of its creations. Swanston Cottage figures in *St Ives* as the home of Flora and her aunt Miss Gilchrist. When the French prisoner escapes from Edinburgh Castle it is to Swanston that he flees for shelter. The drovers Simms and Candlish, who are to lead St Ives across the borders, are pretty much John Tod the Swanston herd made into twins; and they lead him over the Pentlands to the great North road. So also in *Weir of Hermiston*, though the geography is not exact, yet the places and descriptions are true to the "hills of home."



## THE HILLS OF HOME

The silence of the glens conferred upon him the wide-open observant eye and the responsive heart. He forgot the limitations of the Edinburgh plainstones; he saw the mystery of the little worlds within the world of Nature. One can trace that through his letters. You can see him watch the plover, nervously flapping the attention of the wanderer away from his nest; or, in a brown muse, he pokes disaster into the big busy community of ants. He hears and sees what often is hid from the mere townsman, the child of cities, enslaved to existence in cramping streets. These things were enriching the essayist's vision, deepening his humanity, widening out his sympathy, giving him the secret of that universal love without which, as the Scripture hath it, all earthly eloquence and human gifts are vain. He becomes as personal in his individual touch as Montaigne. He argues with his conscience over having been rude to one of the servants—he an-

## THE HILLS OF HOME

alyses his very worry over the apologizing.

He was stirred by the activity of Nature, the sound of Nature's unrest. The garden at Swanston had its share of this kind of thing, when the wind blew straight out of the hills, laden with the breath of the whins. He says: "The trees were all in a tempest, and roared like a heavy surf; the paths all strewn with fallen apple-blossom and leaves. I got a quiet seat behind a yew and went away into a meditation. I was very happy after my own fashion, and whenever there came a blink of sunshine, or a bird whistled higher than usual, or a little powder of white apple-blossom came over the hedge and settled about me in the grass, I had the gladdest little flutter at my heart, and stretched myself for very voluptuousness."

In the restfulness of the garden-house he was sometimes driven in upon himself; and questions of To-morrow, and the furth-

## THE HILLS OF HOME

er future veiled in the mystery of Beyond, combined with the wind-symphonies and the picture-making spell of the mists, made his days only swift enough in their passing. He had thoughts, too, on topics that had perplexed him, which arguments with his father had not sweetened. Yet Time, not argument, was clarifying them.

"This God may not be cruel when all is done; He may relent and be good to us *à la fin des fins*. Think of how He tempers our afflictions to us, of how tenderly He mixes in bright joys with the grey web of trouble and care that we call our life."

He was extremely sensitive to the Pathetic Fallacy.

"It may be that two clods together, two flowers together, two grown trees together touching each other deliciously with their spread leaves, it may be that these dumb things have their own priceless sympathies, surer and more untroubled than ours."

The influence of the lonely and remote

## THE HILLS OF HOME

environment played on his heart and feelings as on a most variedly sensitive instrument. Sometimes he hated the noisy breezes. "In my hell," said he, "it would always blow a gale." In one of his most interesting letters he says:

"The day was warm enough, but it blew a whole gale of wind; and the noise and the purposeless rude violence of it somehow irritated and depressed me. There was good news, however, though the anxiety must still be long. O peace, peace, whither are you fled and where have you carried my old quiet humour? I am so bitter and disquiet, and speak even spitefully to people. And somehow, though I promise myself amendment, day after day finds me equally rough and sour to those about me. But this would pass with good health and good weather; and at bottom I am not unhappy; the soil is still good although it bears thorns; and the time will come again for flowers."

## THE HILLS OF HOME

Although his soul feels driven, buffeted and beaten by the wind that roars among the trees, though he knows that the hill-top is sheeted like a ghost in grey rain, and the valleys are filled with mist, yet his heart is sheltered in warmth and quiet, the garden is fair and all its sweetness lying in the dim love-light of the veiled moon, and the lingering glamour of dying day; and he knows there is beauty still in the lovely world he lives in. But the knowledge has sorrow clinging to the skirt of its gladness. There is a shadow familiar to him in the sweetness of the scene.

The questionings and lingerings about the door of the grave, so characteristic of Scottish Calvinism, are not necessarily morbid things, but just like going round about an old friend's house, trying the latch, and peeping in occasionally at the window.

At Swanston he was often ill and weary, but it was the anvil-hammering time, the

## THE HILLS OF HOME

crushing of thought into imperishable form in the laminated life.

He was very sensitive to all sound. 'I have been made miserable,' he wrote, "by Chopin's *Marche Funèbre*. Reading those things which I like aloud when I am fancifully excited is the keenest artistic pleasure I know." This he inherited from his mother, who would sometimes be moved to tears even by an anthem in the church. Again, he writes under emotion: "The drums and fifes up in the castle were sounding the call through the dark." These very frequently went through his soul.

Every aspect of Edinburgh spoke to him—the silence that sometimes holds the city as well as the sound that fills it. "The gardens below my windows are steeped in diffused sunlight, and every tree seems standing on tip-toe, strained and silent as though to get its head above its neighbours and listen. . . I wish I could make you feel the hush that is over every-

## THE HILLS OF HOME

thing, only made the more perfect by rare interruptions and the rich placid light and the still autumnal foliage."

The summer days at Swanston enriched his heart's experience of communion with Nature; while in winter the swift glance, like a swallow's flight, across the Forth, from the back windows of Heriot Row, caught vision of the hills of Fife, beyond the shining Firth which "bridled the wild Hielan'man" in the days of old. Swanston gave him also word pictures which stand out clear and perfect in a line or two. "How the rain falls! The mist is quite low on the hill."

He frequently felt his inertness as a reproach; as though he were but "something for the winds to blow over, and the sun to glimpse on and go off again, as it might be a tree or a gravestone." At the same time he had a silver lining to his cloud, for almost in the same breath he says:

"Here I am back again in my old humour

## THE HILLS OF HOME

of a sunny equanimity; to see the world fleet about me; and the days chase each other like sun patches, and the nights like cloud shadows, on a windy day; content to see them go, and no wise reluctant for the cool evening, with its dew, and stars, and fading stain of tragic red."

Sometimes his love of country, obliterated by the mists of suffering and pain which he had endured as if at hard hands, broke through like a sunburst from behind the darkness.

"I have been a Scotchman," said he, "all my life and denied my native land."

Yet, again, he could laugh at it:

"Here I am in my native land, being gently blown and hailed upon, and creeping closer and closer to the fire."

The pathos of his struggle against the anxieties of life often peeps its head through the golden clouds. Although by 1887 he was worth about £4000 a year, his income in 1880 was only £109, but he declared



## THE HILLS OF HOME

himself ready to face the world on £200. He feels, as a test of success of his labour, "If you can interest a person for an hour and a half you have not been idle." He loves the balm a story gives in sick weariness. "We want incident, interest, action: to the devil with your philosophy. When we are well again, and have an easy mind, we shall peruse your important work. . . . So I, when I am ready to go beside myself, stick my head into a story-book, as the ostrich with her bush."

His optimism had, however, many a struggle with pessimism, which was his chamber-companion also. "I am not well at all," he writes. "But hope to be better. . . . To-morrow I may be carrying topgallant sails again. But just at present I am scraping along with a juremast and a kind of amateur rudder."

There was more truth than perhaps he thought in his humoresque sketch of his tomb, with its motto—

# THE HILLS OF HOME

“ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

born 1850, of a family of engineers,  
died . . . . .

‘Nitor aquis.’

Home is the sailor, home from sea,  
And the hunter home from the hill.

You, who pass this grave, put aside hatred;  
love kindness; be all services remembered  
in your heart, and all offences pardoned.”

He was bravely content to suffer. He is  
a wounded soldier in the campaign of life.  
Yet he begs that he have not to suffer  
more than he can bear. “For that makes  
a man mad.” At the same time he prays,  
“Never to sink up to my eyes in comfort,  
and grow dead in virtues and respect-  
ability.”

He sees the ennobling discipline of life’s  
trials. He says: “I am a bad man by nature,  
I suppose; but I cannot be good without  
suffering a little.” He discerns, also, plainly,  
through that window of pain, what is the  
end of life—“The pleasurable death of

## THE HILLS OF HOME

self: a thing not to be attained because it is a thing belonging to heaven."

He had the universal sympathy of the truest genius. As when he saw the little feathered world invaded by the terror of a hawk, and noted the songless thrill of fear that filled the garden. "I did not know before," he says, "that the voice of birds could be so tragically expressive. . . . Really, they almost frightened me; I could hear mothers and wives in terror for those who were dear to them."

His frequent bitterness of utterance and discontent was not by any means his natural mood. He was not given to concentration upon his own self. With that poetic altruism which made Burns, in the heart of storm and winter, think of the suffering creatures, he writes:

"It is a fine strong night, full of wind;  
the trees are all crying out in the darkness;  
funny to think of the birds asleep outside,  
on the tossing branches, the little bright

## THE HILLS OF HOME

eyes closed, the brave wings folded, the little hearts that beat so hard and thick (so much harder and thicker than ever human heart) all stilled and quieted in deep slumber, in the midst of this noise and turmoil. Why, it will be as much as I can do to sleep in here in my walled room; so loud and jolly the wind sounds through the open window." Ashel listens, the night's unrest gets into his being. He sees the far-stretching world, of unknown and untraversed spaces, the roads that wind away behind the hills, "the sleeping towns and sleeping farm-houses and cottages," the low places down beside the surf-beaten shores, and his fancy fares a-foot past them all, with Slumber following, red-eyed, behind him.

In that same letter his wayward mood finds expression. It is the spirit of the essayist, tired with the struggle.

The impulse to begin life at the very start of a fresh furrow, out under the clear

## THE HILLS OF HOME

azure coolness of the night, away from the fret and fever that have made his efforts such distress, and to go on, without turning or returning, "until somewhere by a road-side or in some clean inn, clean death opened his arms to me and took me to his quiet heart for ever." It would be like falling into that deep Sleep which tired humanity longs for, like a ripe thing, carrying the full heart of a chastened experience with him over the shadow-limit into the Land of Dawn. He has been friends with Death. He has felt the grass and the daises growing out of his grave. He can laugh in the grim cold shadows, a ghost not fearsome, but familiar and friendly, with greetings for life, or its questionings, not a tearful good-bye.

He was evidently, for the time, in that territory so familiar to him—"the desert of Cough, and by the ghoul-haunted woodland of Fever."

It gradually, in his separation, across the

## THE HILLS OF HOME

sea, became impossible for him to think of ever returning to his native land. The "Hills of Home" were to be always Hills of Dream. To have made the venture were to play with certain death, were to be guilty of something like an act of suicide. He schooled his heart to the deprivation; and wrote to Crockett, from Samoa:

"I shall never take that walk by the Fisher's Tryst and Glencorse. I shall never see Auld Reekie. I shall never set my foot again upon the heather. Here I am until I die, and here will I be buried. The word is out, and the doom written. Or, if I do come, it will be a voyage to a further goal."

Crockett's words of dedication to him of *The Stickit Minister* had moved him very deeply to remembrance. He wrote from the depths of his being when he said:

"It's a wrench not to be planted in Scotland—that I can never deny—if I could only be buried in the hills, under the heather, and a table tombstone like the martyrs,

## THE HILLS OF HOME

where the whaups and plovers are crying!  
... Singular that I should fulfil the Scots  
destiny throughout, and live a voluntary  
exile, and have my head filled with the  
blessed beastly place all the time!"

In this respect he hit, in his *Master of Ballantrae*, upon the contradiction that is within the love of a Scotsman for home, where he makes a character say that he has been guilty of two errors, in that he ever left his native city, and that he ever returned to it!





A "CLACHAN" LIKE Swanston was certain to have its "character." And Stevenson's note-taking soul was just as certain to single him out. He found in Robert Young the old gardener a subject worthy of his pen.

Whether or no it be that in the inmost nature of our fellow countrymen there is a strong spice of original sin, making us suspect a truly lineal descent from the primary delver, who leaned upon his spade in Eden's riggs looking around vainly for conversational diversion, until he sinned, and, being flung out to perspire a wage, became father of all who plant cabbages, and progenitor of Flower Shows, so that Adam is still a common and favourite name in many Scottish families, and the laws of heredity make all head-gardeners Scotsmen, one thing is certain, that the Scottish man who digs and plants seems always to

## THE HILLS OF HOME

speak out of a long, ancient, and very intimate acquaintance with the beginnings of things. His soul, with roots of early knowledge clinging to it, and much rudimentary clay, seems to have been turned out of pot after pot through multitudinous seasons and varieties of soil carrying each experience with it.

These characteristics make almost any gardener, like a minister's man, a deeply interesting subject of study. Stevenson was, however, wrong in thinking that Robert Young, the gardener at Swanston, was probably the last. The type survives. The occupation seems to produce the character.

The agricultural farmer is generally more full of life-thoughts than the man whose days are devoted to "beasts." The growing of green things, the sowing, planting, reaping, and in-gathering of food-stuffs for earth's living creatures make for seasons of quiet reflective thought. While they are growing in the fields imagination has

## THE HILLS OF HOME

its times of brooding and enrichment. It has, besides, unique opportunities of looking in the eye of Nature and interpreting what is hid in Nature's heart.

Especially is the man of plants a man of parts. He is also a man of ruminating tendencies. Indeed, every Scotsman has a reminiscent mind. The past is always close as his shadow behind him. Seen through the grey mist of a Scottish memory, it is apt to become transfigured and transformed. Little things, mean enough to the eye of the ordinary Saxon soul, become ennobled. The casual word the Marquis dropped becomes lengthened into an intimate conversation; the wage of fifty years since, a princely income compared with the pittance which secures the service of to-day's experience. The forcing-frame becomes a vinery at least, and the garden of to-day a wretched thing of squalid plots, alongside of the great demesne which once the old Adam of cab-

89

## THE HILLS OF HOME

bage and calceolaries graced with his presence, and ruled as King of Spades. The Scottish workman, the more he loves his master, loves the more to impress upon him his own condescension in giving his valuable labour to him, and to show sometimes, by a gesture pregnant with meaning beyond words, how well within the grip of his own hand is the problem of his present sphere. He may show this by the long list of gardening implements which he details as being necessary for the proper working of his field of labour, which has Art behind it, and which if his master purchase he will be apt to find lying unused in the stick-shed ere a month go by. Further, his quiet hours among growing things become woven together into a kind of fragrant loneliness, begetting an array of solitary thoughts set in families, maxims of life with the smack of proverbial literature about them, and deeds clothed in the characteristics of dignified personality.

## THE HILLS OF HOME

Originality seems to spring from the soil. No soul passes its time in close contact with fields, furrows, and forests, without acquiring its peculiar tang in thought, deed, and expression. Poachers, fishermen, and shepherds all have it. But gardeners exhale it.

It was, therefore, a very precious experience that Stevenson had through his association in the garden at Swanston with old Robert Young. And it is well that his distemper portrait of the old man was not allowed to lie forgotten in the pages of the *College Magazine*, which, after four public appearances, died a quiet death from defective circulation. One can see the veteran moving about among his flower-plots, under the quiet hills, and hear his gentle brag of the great days in Eden, before the fall into the meaner condescensions of his later toils.

His appropriation of what he worked amongst is peculiar to his class, who in-

## THE HILLS OF HOME

variably identify themselves with whatsoever they take in hand. I have known a beadle, who, having assured himself, tried hard to assure the minister that the people had been turning out better on Sundays since he began to ring the bell and carry up the books; while I have also heard as common every-day statements from the lips of the "second man in the parish," reminiscences of "the last time *we* baptised a child here," or "the last marriage at which *we* officiated."

The mind of a Scottish gardener of the old school becomes the sheltering-place of innumerable quaint notions, which seem to walk out and in, as if from stage doors, at the most unexpected moments, with the most unanticipated remarks. I well remember one such who admired the sententious semi-theological phraseology of the minister's man. The latter functionary was an authority on bees, and if at any time in the parish, during the swooning summer, a

## THE HILLS OF HOME

crowd was seen gazing open-mouthed into a tree, a passer-by would be justified in concluding that it was the church-officer securing a swarm.

"Do you know," asked the old gardener of me, one day as I met him with the forester—"Do you know what I think, sometimes, when Tammas goes up into the pulpit wi' the books, and gives the Bible a clap on the sma' o' the back, and takes a look round the Kirk? Well," he said, perfectly gravely, and with honest intention, "I aye think a short discourse on bees would be very acceptable!"

Old Robert Young of Swanston, who despised with infinite pity the latter-day love of gewgaws, and tried to curb the tendency by developing troops of cauliflowers and cabbages across the flowerbeds, was of the true Scottish stamp. Two hundred years before his own day, he would have been tramping in the army of the Covenant, or discussing when the con-

## THE HILLS OF HOME

venticle was over, knotty points of Scripture and questionable interpretations of abstruse dogma; for his life, and the life of his kind, was nourished on daily scraps that had dropped as if from tables of stone, out of the Hebrew Scriptures.

His dreams were doubtless filled with shadows, of date probably not much later, as a general rule, than the Mosaic Dispensation; and yet he would have his own views on the crossing of Greenland, which would be as clear as those which he held about the crossing of the Red Sea, regarding which he probably knew just as much. He would have his own opinion also, of the character and conduct of the patriarchs, and would be apt to despise Adam for losing a good situation over a depraved taste in apples. His Scotchness would come out like a stone-crop of contradictoriness, which, breaking through the close-trimmed lawn of his suavity, just served the purpose of preventing the de-



## THE HILLS OF HOME

velopment of false conceit in those with whom he held converse. We can understand the old man being proud of his age, yet shaking a deprecating head over his three-score years and ten, remembering how they were "few and evil"; while, at the same time, he would resent deeply the application of the adjective "auld" to himself. Each day draws a picture of its passing, over his heart, his work bending him to its own shape; the earth he serves and feeds drawing him nearer to her bosom, as a mother draws a reluctant child close to her in the descending shadows, till with a quiet surprise at the liberty, and astonished at the careless forgetfulness of Providence, he is blinded, and gagged, and carried off by death, the conqueror of kings and gardeners, to the green places far beyond the limit of this world of changing seasons and Flower-Shows. Yet ever, in some reproduction of his kind, one feels as though he had really come

## THE HILLS OF HOME

through a resurrection; for, so long as Scotland lives, the old Scotch gardener can never die. It was, therefore, the depiction of a deathless type that Stevenson gives us on his clever page, a type that still goes on, pottering among greenhouses and cabbages, under the shadow of the Hills of Home.

Alongside of his picture of the gardener stands that of the other native character, John Tod, the shepherd of the Pentlands.

The Nature love of the early world brought down, to dwell amongst the sheep-cotes and pastoral glens, the gods who loved to sit by shepherds' fires, and share the rude repasts in huts where poor men lay. I wonder how they would have fared in intercourse with some of our Scottish herds, sun-burned and wind-tanned, and hoarse with shouting to their dogs! They live in a world of their own. Knowledge, strong, big, and solitary, fearless with the fearlessness as of a deity's, and as confid-







- S. Hope -

WATER ON THE MOUNTAIN  
 (A. Hope) and Paul, looking out of and down the mountain  
 (A. Hope) and Paul, looking out of and down the mountain



## THE HILLS OF HOME

ent of infallibleness, springs up within the heart of such a man; for, where there is none to contend against his will, and where a man is literally lord of the creatures, is it a wonder that he will shout his opinions in the face of constable and parson, and ban upon the hillside, unhesitatingly, a contumacious world? The man of sheep is Nature's general. From his knoll he takes in at one glance the arrangement of a whole campaign, sending out his four-legged scouts and wise lieutenants, to turn the flanks of scattered droves and bands of scared and scampering sheep. He has a code of his own, too—a whistle, a wave of the hand, a yelp, or a word out of a vocabulary which no philologist can ever run to earth, in its remote sources away among nomad pastoralities. His commands tolerate no contradiction, and are above all question; and woe to the canine intelligence which flickers, even for a second, out of the line of perfect understanding. He is

## THE HILLS OF HOME

apt to think meanly, you may be sure, of the other pastor in the parish who does his shouting only on one day in the week when the John Tods of the parish are silent; and does it, too, not on the hillside, but in the fold; flinging out his commands not to sheep-dogs but to the flock direct, just as much to their confusion and bewilderment as would ensue were the same method applied by John Tod himself! I can hear him saying, with a snort, on a wind-swept grassy headland in the hills, "What wonder though his flock scatter with such a herding, when the pastor himself is sheep-dog and shepherd, and there isn't a well-trained collie among them."

The town man laughs to see the big hodden-clad son of the hills stupefied among swift cars and motor bicycles, not able to find his way, without multitudinous bumpings, along broad crowded pavements. Yet let him loose in the trackless wild, in the teeth of snow and hail that



## THE HILLS OF HOME

obliterate all things — see him in the swamp, or on the face of a swooning cliff, after a lamb that has wandered, or a sheep that has been lost, and you see the noblest bit of fearlessness and indefatigable assiduity indomitable, that your mortal eyes will ever look upon this side of the stars. He fears no human face; no title and no rank have consideration from him alongside of the interests of his flock. No mother's passion for her child, no love of patriot for his fatherland, ever could eclipse the strenuous devotion to solitary duty, the blazing tempestuous courage of the shepherd, child of the glens among the

“Hills of Home.”



IT IS REMARKABLE THAT he who knew so much of human character did not, in his work, make that use which might have been expected of the complex nature of womanhood. It is true that this, and even more, has been said so often, that it has been accepted without question that Stevenson could not draw women at all. That he was himself conscious of this, we can see from his letter to Marcel Schwob where he says:

“Vous ne détestez pas alors mes bonnes femmes? Moi, je les déteste. I have never pleased myself with any women of mine save two character parts, one of only a few lines—the Countess of Rosen, and Madame Desprez in the *Treasure of Franchard*.”

Nevertheless, it is also true that one has only to read his letters to see how he could interest women in him—a proof that he was not without the power of being inter-

## THE HILLS OF HOME

ested in them. Further, I think it is quite plain that he was not seized by the master passion until late in his career, when he met the woman who possessed him to the end. Besides, he wrote many of his stories for the story's sake, studying certain actions of men, who were impulse-driven by other motives and purposes than those of sex. They are the adventures of men banished and driven from home, not in consequence of contact with feminine intrigue, but by the greed of gold, by outré passion, and by the love of adventure. Yet when probably impelled to do so by the fact of grumbling criticism, he does bring in the feminine legend, I do not think that any fair-minded critic could say that he fails.

Besides, sex problems are not absolutely necessary in romance. Although the tender passion has made for more romantic situation than anything else in the world, yet there have been other impulses which have affected the relations of individuals

## THE HILLS OF HOME

and communities sufficiently to create positions of intense emotional interest. The conflict of a heart against itself, of a soul against its destiny, are all sufficiently moving and absorbing to fill a canvas. Stevenson's mental interests were in reality, at heart, historical and psychological. He concentrates in *Kidnapped* upon the mystery of the Appin murder rather than on the slow fire of David Balfour's love. It is not, in fact, primarily a love story at all, but a study of the character of Alan Breck the Highlander in contrast to David Balfour the slow-witted Lowlander. So with the majority of his tales. His women were perhaps mostly in his story as pivots, or in order that they might do something for the men that are in it. This was quite natural, from the position of women in a typical Scottish household, and from the semi-Hebraic Biblical point of view of old Thomas Stevenson the novelist's father. The women of his youth who had a sense

## THE HILLS OF HOME

of enfranchisement were apt to be looked upon as eccentrics by the staid standards of Edinburgh society. It was still the day of the indoors woman. Models for Mrs Weir of Hermiston were not difficult to find—the peevish textifier, confined to her sofa, a kind of drawing-room martyr with a “tidy” on her. The fact is, that, for the purposes of Stevenson’s story, the women had just to be as he made them. I am not sure that his own estimate in his letter to Schwob in regard to Countess Rosen is correct, for it is as difficult for a man to make a fair estimate of the offspring of his mind as of that of his body. Each reader is free to choose his own heroine to fall in love with. Stevenson had to depict the women he knew as he saw them, not as we do. His women were women of whim. Their angels do tweak the ear of their purpose sometimes.

In *Weir of Hermiston*, however, that masterly torso, bearing about its lines the

## THE HILLS OF HOME

marks and imprint of great art, and insight, the two Kirsties stand out limned clearly and possessingly. It is the fashion to concentrate praise on Kirstie the elder, but the picture of her niece is one of the masterpieces of literary portraiture of a girl's soul. It would be interesting to know a truer picture, with a deeper inner knowledge of feminine human nature than it shows. One cannot, at the same time, forget the tragedy of the midnight scene of the heart-wrung passionateness of the elder Kirstie's pleading.

It is also the vogue to scorn Stevenson's picture of Catriona, calling her "a boy dressed in girl's clothes." This cry, repeated by the multitude that so readily take their opinions from anybody's printed page, has been attempted to be met by the supposition that those critics have never been in love. It is, however, far clearer that they do not understand the character of a Highland woman. Catriona is not a

105

## THE HILLS OF HOME

mere dairy-maid, but a personality instinct with the feelings of a Highland lady. Her fidelity, her patience, her devotion, the constancy of her affection, win the heart even of the reader who may have prepossessions against her, as gently and as surely as in real life she would have done. Nor is the feminine naive gravity of Miss Barbara Grant in the same story a creation in fustian and sawdust, but feminine to her finger-tips, and true to her class. Olalla too—what a thing of passion she is! While, as for a simple Scottish girl—what a glimpse is that of “the nameless lass” who helps Alan Breck and David Balfour to get across the Forth, in their flight. In a touch or two she seizes our visual imagination and vanishes. One can hear the flutter of her skirts as she escapes from our presence.

His highest reach in his womenkind was undoubtedly Kirstie Elliot, senior, the true Scottish muirland woman, with a



## THE HILLS OF HOME

lash-snap in the whip of her words. Kirstie the younger is also a true daughter of the Hills of Home, so different from her aunt—quite evidently a careful study of genuine womanhood. Of course she has no depth in her—she is only a sunny pool rippled by any passing breath, shadowed by the wind of any passing bird.

If in any way Robert Louis Stevenson failed or seemed to fail in his depiction of womanhood, it was not from want of knowledge of the sex, for he was passionate, and he knew passionate secrets. Speaking, in his letters, of the Elgin Marbles, he says, "If one could love a woman like that once, see her once grow pale with passion, and once wring your lips out upon hers, would it not be a small thing to die."

It is so difficult in ordinary life to fathom the sunsmit, shadow-chased personality of woman, so ready for leal self-abnegation, so prompt to do and dare for

## THE HILLS OF HOME

sweet love's sake, yet so often in the grip of fickle whim and passing mood, that only a great artist can catch and fix the lines of a true portrait; sometimes, indeed, the greatest artist only by suggestion settles the eluding sylphlike personality upon the canvas of imagination. Yet it cannot be denied that such feminine characters as Stevenson has touched and quickened have not been unknown to many through whose lives they have sent their lasting influence; and it must just be taken for granted that their kind have passed by the grumblers.

His verse, especially his Scottish verse, is not his greatest creation. He would not himself have claimed it to be so. His models are rather obvious.

From what he himself says he felt very much the influence of hapless Robert Fergusson. Sometimes, indeed, he thought he was a reincarnation of that poet. It was natural that the fate of that young Edin-

## THE HILLS OF HOME

burgh man, whose health and reason were shattered by Bohemian dissipations, should have appealed very powerfully to Stevenson who moved through a Bohemian world also. Superlative though the poems of Burns be, it is undeniable that his chequered career intensely deepened Stevenson's interest in his life. Stevenson's verse utterance follows in all details the Scottish traditions. He does not, in fact, make in them a new contribution to the stock, although his personal voice and view are present. What is known as the *Habbie Simson* stave, a form called by Allan Ramsay the "standard Habbie," and which was especially used in Scottish poetry for epistolary verse, was for the most part his medium of expression. This measure itself had a history of its own. It was troubadour in origin, and from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century was in use in England. In the eleventh century Count William of

109

## THE HILLS OF HOME

Poitiers wrote in it. From courtly singers it passed out, however, to be a favourite measure of singers in courts and alleys, and after a most varied history it became, after 1640, the model of Scottish verse, until Burns made it practically the metrical uniform of his muse. This was the verse used by Stevenson in *A Lowden Sabbath Morn*, in which he laughs, not a sardonic laugh, but a genial sympathetic appreciation of the humours of the religious habits of his native land and fellow-countrymen. In *A Lowden Sabbath Morn* he employs the same arts of the master-craftsman, with choice of vocalic effect and picturesque presentment of fact and character, as in his *Essays*.

The clinkum-clank o' Sabbath bells  
Noo to the hoastin' rookery swells,  
Noo faintin' laigh in shady dells,  
      Sounds far and near,  
An' through the simmer kintry tells  
      Its tale o' cheer.

True to the life is the picture of the ham-

## THE HILLS OF HOME

let gathering for worship in the church-yard, where

The prentit stanes that mark the deid,  
Wi' lengthened lip, the sarious read;  
Syne wag a moraleesin' heid,  
An' then and there  
Their hirplin' practice an' their creed  
Try hard to square.

Inside the sacred building the minister  
expounds to the drowsing parish, redolent  
of peppermint and southernwood, the sins  
of others, and especially

the fau'ts o' ither kirks,  
An' shaws the best o' them  
No muckle better than mere Turks,  
When a's confessed o' them.  
Bethankit! what a bonny creed!  
What mair would ony Christian need?—  
The braw words rumm'le ower his heid,  
Nor steer the sleeper;  
And in their restin' graves, the deid  
Sleep aye the deeper.

In somewhat more of the spirit of Satire  
he looks through the eye of a Scotsman  
returned from abroad with the hunger for  
the old doctrines of his youth, after the

## THE HILLS OF HOME

spiritual unsettlement of the land through which he has been wandering. He lays a finger on the weaknesses of his people. Scots folks have always been fond of their own way in religious forms of worship. Each individual likes to have his own kind of faith. When an Englishman quarrels with another Englishman he sulks or commits a breach of the peace, but when a Scotsman has a quarrel he goes off and founds a sect. No matter on how slight a ground the quarrel occurs, say, from the use of a harmonium to the singing of a hymn, or the taking up of a collection, he will always find plenty to follow him, till there be enough to have amongst them another schism, or two. Stevenson hits this off with a twinkling eye, and his tongue in his cheek, while he also touches lightly on the queer combination of spirituality and spirituousity which was once the note of Scottish faith.

Despite the innovations of hymn books

## THE HILLS OF HOME

and the gesturing manners of the new precentor, the returned emigrant found his old satisfaction from the general sweeping condemnation of everything and everybody which formed the staple of the preacher's word.

I owned, wi' gratitude and wonder,  
He was a pleasure to sit under.

His Scottish poems give clear impressions of Nature, religion, and life in his native land. For example, how Horatian is the spirit of this picture.

Frae nirly, nippin', Eas' lan' breeze,  
Frae Norlan' snaw, an' haar o' seas,  
Weel happit in your gairden trees,  
    A bonny bit,  
Atween the muckle Pentland's knees,  
    Secure ye sit. . . .

Frae the high hills the curlew ca's;  
The sheep gang baaing by the wa's;  
Or whiles a clan o' roosty craws  
    Cangle thegether;  
The wild bees seek the gairden raws,  
    Weariet wi' heather.

Or in the gloamin' douce an' gray  
The sweet-throat mavis tunes her lay;

## THE HILLS OF HOME

The herd comes linkin' doun the brae;  
An' by degrees  
The muckle siller mune maks way  
Amang the trees.

The last verse especially is a beautiful  
reminiscence of the "Hills of Home."



## CHAPTER

## EIGHT

**W**HERE DID HE GET the charm of his writing, with its incisive phrase, its necromantic glamour, its vistas of stillness and charm, with episodes that hush the heart as though we get in that moment a glimpse into the bacchanal-haunted glades, where Dionysus leads the king, in the palinode of Euripides?

The man himself did not know. When he tries to tell us, he attempts what is beyond the reach of his own real knowledge. He looked back on the nearest stepping-stones which only had led him over the last brook he had crossed in his pilgrimage; but he forgot the heart-seeking voice of the bugles in the dark, up on the magic Castle-rock, encrusted with memories of the old struggles of the makers of Edinburgh, the haunting shadows of the midnight streets, the lone peaks that had looked at him through the grey mist, the running waters

## THE HILLS OF HOME

in the hills that had broken in upon him in the wakeful intervals of his sleeping, the cry of the winds on the grey crags of Kirk Yetton, the honeysuckle and the rose-leaves tost at his feet over the dyke of the garden at Swanston. Ay, and the shadows of the fathers of his race, who had struggled in border foray and in conflicts with the sea.

Stevenson was, and still is, largely and widely misunderstood by certain stupid people of whom and of whose kind there are always plenty in the world ready to take an author absolutely literally at his word; and so, reading Stevenson's statements as to the books and authors that influenced him in the reminiscences of his wide reading, are prematurely ready to accept him as having been, for the most part, as he puts it, "the sedulous ape to Hazlitt, to Lamb, to Wordsworth, to Sir Thomas Browne, to Defoe, to Hawthorne, to Montaigne, to Baudelaire, and to Obermann." What he meant by using that phrase is eas-

## THE HILLS OF HOME

ily understood by every reflective reader, and especially by every man who writes, and knows his business. He was sharpening his sword. Every artist has to begin, in a sense, as a copyist, in order to learn the use of his tools. No man becomes a master by hitting out in the dark.

We can perceive and appreciate the "sedulous ape" business, for example, in such a thing as his analysis of the contradictions in man, where there is proof that the shadows of Bacon and Pascal stood each at the writer's shoulder while he wrote:

"What a monstrous spectre is this man, the disease of the agglutinated dust, lifting alternate feet or lying drugged with slumber; killing, feeding, growing, bringing forth small copies of himself; grown upon with hair like grass, fitted with eyes that move and glitter in his face; a thing to set children screaming!—and yet, looked at nearer, known as his fellows knows

## THE HILLS OF HOME

him, how surprising are his attributes!" And so forth, in similar strain.

That he owed something also to Jean-Jacques Rousseau is manifest, from the following, taken at random from the *Confessions*:

"There is something in walking that stirs and quickens my ideas; I can hardly think when I remain in one place; my body must be on the move to set my mind agoing. The sight of the country, the succession of agreeable views, the open air, the big appetite, the good health I win by walking, the freedom of the Inn, the absence of everything that makes me feel my dependence, everything that reminds me of my situation, all this loosens my soul, gives me a greater audacity to think, throws me, so to speak, into the immensity of beings, to combine them, to choose them, to appropriate them at my will, without fear or constraint. I dispose of all Nature like a master."

## THE HILLS OF HOME

Or again, take this:

"I lay down voluptuously on the ledge of a sort of recess or false door let into the wall of a terrace. . . . A nightingale was just overhead, and I went to sleep to its song; my slumbers were sweet, my awakening was still more so. It was broad daylight; my eyes, on opening, saw the water, the verdure, a wonderful landscape. I got up and shook myself; I felt hungry; I wended my way gaily to the town, resolved to spend two pieces of six blanks, that I still had left, in a good breakfast."

One might almost feel as though Stevenson's voice were here speaking, as though his genius had made response to the French influence of old treaty connections with the Southern land and its sunny champaigns, verdant, and gay with laughter and with songs of nightingales and happy wayfarers.

In fact, words were his comrades. He carried in his pockets one book to read in,

## THE HILLS OF HOME

and another to write in, writing not for publication, but as a child would learn to walk, by exercise of its limbs. Sometimes, thus, he would catch a thought worth keeping, as one might hap upon an escaping angel. His experience was indeed just the same as that of any imaginative boy with the lure of Literature before him.

In his correspondence he once declared that he had moulded his style on the weird pages of Patrick Walker, the grim covenanting pedlar. I am certain this meant little more, however, than just that the "far ben" glimpses of the recesses of the human soul with which Walker's pages abound had given hush to his own fancies, and made them stand a-tip-toe often, with finger on their lips. He was, indeed, so sensitively responsive to directness and strength of utterance that he was apt to feel that he owed everything to the last vivid thing he read; and, doubtless, for a time the ripple of the last stone that fell in-

## THE HILLS OF HOME

to the pool of his consciousness kept moving slowly onward to the shore. Almost from his earliest he was, as he said, a student of methods of expression; also, he read everything, everywhere, anyhow.

One can easily trace also the vivid influence of Walt Whitman—the astonishing naked man of modern literature.

Besides, what is originality, but the individual's own interpretation of what, after all, must be, at this time of day, the great universal common-places of life and thought?

The more widely a wise and clever man reads, the more he will interpret his reading by the varied and ever-varying library of Humanity. In the wide world he finds his true commentary. The heart of man is his whetstone.

Stevenson did not really need other men's mirrors. He needed no second-hand inspiration. He had skylights of his own. He did not require to pay ferrymen's fees;

## THE HILLS OF HOME

he could be his own steersman, sailing the wide seas of imagination. He knew the secrets of life and death intimately—they haunt a Bohemian world. The man who lives in Bohemia is apt neither to take death so seriously as that grim visitant expects, nor even mirth so lightly as men look for. So Stevenson is a man earnest—inevitably so, seeing as he does, how severe is the heart of things; and yet he smiles, for he has the magician's gift, and can work a transformationscene. He can afford quiet laughter to illumine his stage, though, at the same time, making one feel, knowing what one does know, that he is sometimes playing jigs to keep up our hearts during the acting of the tragedy. He was, in fact, an instinctive rebel against conventions, both of joy and sorrow. He was a born actor, for he was "of imagination all compact."

Now, each man can breathe his own feeling even into another man's notes, so



## THE HILLS OF HOME

long as he play on his own fiddle. Ill-trained and ill-tempered critics, with narrow outlook and vague experience of life and literature, are prone to confuse issues in such a matter. It is true, for example, that the mystery story may appeal to the creative imagination sufficiently to beget another of its own kind. One would expect, in the nature of things, that this should be so. But it does not at all follow that Edgar Allan Poe is the father of Stevenson. He himself declared in writing *Treasure Island* that he was to write a pirate story "in the old way." But, just as with a singer using a set form of notes, he gives it, even in an exercise, the turn of his own voice. After all, the possible situations of difficulty in human experience have their limitations; and it is, indeed, amazing that such variety can be built up out of a vocabulary which, even at its widest, has its restrictions.

The craze for crude comparisons in

## THE HILLS OF HOME

present-day criticism is often only a mode of cheap clap-trap. Nothing was cheaper for example, than to call Stevenson the modern Scott, the modern Burns, the Scottish Addison or Steele. Scott and Burns are the crest of their wave. They are alone. They may give, by the ictus of their genius, impetus to other minds, but their lion-skins are not transferable, any more than their personalities. Besides, the fact that a man writes about *Elsinore* or the Jacobites does not justify a comparison with *Hamlet* or *Waverley*. The true comparison by a true critic is the comparison of a man with his own previous work, which may be his best or his worst. All the same, of course, no man living or writing in the world of imaginative creation can help being splashed a little with some spray from the perennial fountains of Montaigne, Pepys, Scott, Balzac, Dumas, and the rest.

For those who believe in portents, such can be found in Stevenson's record. The

## THE HILLS OF HOME

legend of a laughter-chased shadow as a remote Celtic progenitor was his. We hear its echo often. Even in his earliest childhood he was brought in a remarkable and dangerous way into contact with the Bohemian world, through the habits of his first nurse. She was unfortunately much addicted to alcohol, and was discovered in a public-house very drunk, while the tiny Robert Louis, tied up like a parcel, lay on a shelf behind the bar. A portrait of the young adventurer among the pewters would be a striking frontispiece! Another proved as perilous an experiment; and then "Cummy," Alison Cunningham, was secured, a precious and inestimable possession. Her tales of weirdry, her ballad lore, and, above all, her rich Scottish vocabulary, had very probably much more to do with the moulding of his world of praise than he was aware of. I believe, in fact, that it cannot be doubted that he owed for style, thought, and matter to "Cummy"

## THE HILLS OF HOME

his old nurse, who must have fed his young imagination with many a draught drawn from the deep well of her remembrance, far more than his fancied indebtedness to Hazlitt and the rest. The relationship between her and him was one of intense love. Her kindness and devotion to him must have been deep as that of a mother. What he wrote to her he meant, when he said:

“Do not suppose that I shall ever forget those long, bitter nights, when I coughed and coughed and was so unhappy, and you were so patient and loving with a poor, sick child. Indeed, Cummy, I wish I might become a man worth talking of, if it were only that you should not have thrown away your pains.”

His imagination had a very weird side to it, which might partly be traced to the influence of this dear delightful old woman. “Do you know,” he writes of one of his tales, “this story of mine is horrible; I only work at it by fits and starts, because I feel

## THE HILLS OF HOME

as if it were a sort of crime against humanity—it is so cruel.” Of course it cannot be denied that, at the back of the Scottish genius, right up against the humour of the race, there is a chord that vibrates to the sardonic grim key-note of Tophet.

From the earliest time Literature had him on her leash. It was with a sorely disappointed heart that his father saw his son turn away resolutely from the profession of engineering, which was the tradition of their family. He made a struggle to obey his father's will in this respect, playing at engineering at Anstruther and at Wick, by day giving some kind of attention to his father's work, but by night, in the silence of his room, touching what to him was real life, modulating and moulding his thoughts, and trying to master the art of expressing them.

He loved the outdoor life, and so perhaps it was not only to oblige his father that he entered into engineering, with a

## THE HILLS OF HOME

hearty dislike for it. It was not unprofitable for his future, for it gave him a living experience among men and ships, with a romantic acquaintance with quays, and harbours, and the mystery of the sea, which stood him in good stead, and was extremely creative in relation to his later work. In a large degree, also, it suited his Bohemian tastes and love for composite companionships.

The hard recognition that engineering was impossible as a profession for him having been faced, he read, or was supposed to read, for the Scottish Bar. Behind all things, however, the shadow of Literature, with a star upon its brow, still beckoned him to follow.

His Bohemian companionships, the miscellaneous friendships and acquaintances which he loved to make, especially among the common people, were strongly creative influences in his life and thought. He is, indeed, essentially, and very largely









THE HOUSE AT THE END OF THE ROAD  
J. H. 1890  
The house at the end of the road, looking towards the  
west, looking at the house.



## THE HILLS OF HOME

through this, the voice of the Scottish mind, as it looks on the stern and "paw-kie" side of things, almost in the same glance. The Scottish peasant lends himself very much to such opportunities of friendship and intimacy with his superiors, and one can see how both they and Stevenson would enjoy the occasion. A glimpse of that kind of thing emerges in one of his letters to Mrs Sitwell.

He tells how a shower of rain drove him for shelter into a tumble-down steading, where he fell into conversation with "a labourer cleaning a byre." In any other country he would have fought shy of communion with a man of that class, but remembering that he was in Scotland he plunged into a discussion upon Education and Politics. The clear mother-wit of the Scottish peasant quickened the mind of the man of culture, by its clear-visioned perception of what had perplexed him in the state of the peasant people of Suffolk.

## THE HILLS OF HOME

And, further, he gave the literary student of men and manners an encouraging uplift, when he declared that he could not understand how any man who had a definite aim in life could be daunted or cast down.

"They that have had a guid schoolin' and do nae mair, whatever they do, they have done; but him that has aye something a-yont need never be weary.' . . . I think the sentiment will keep, even through a change of words, something of the heart-some ring of encouragement that it had for me; and that from a man cleaning a byre! You see what John Knox and his schools have done."

One can easily see this lean man of genius loving to talk even to "a labourer cleaning a byre," while outside the rain patters, making the dust lift up as it hits the earth with a "ping," and the roar of the mill-lade punctuates the conversation. It creates a strong epithetic picture.

## THE HILLS OF HOME

That same letter has a touch of the Stevenson of the most intimate essays, especially in regard to the power, which was his own, of making even sound almost visible. For example:

“We lay together a long time on the beach; the sea just babbled among the stones; and at one time we heard the hollow, sturdy beat of the paddles of an unseen steamer somewhere round the cape.” It makes the stillness of a library vibrate.

One catches also a real touch of the born essayist in his letter to Baxter of October 1872, which is, in reality, a discourse on Fooldom, as concentrated as a pearl. It is so perfect and concise that it must be reproduced in his own words.

“That is a happy land, if you like—and not so far away either. Take a fool’s advice and let us strive without ceasing to get into it. Hark in your ear again: ‘THEY ALLOW PEOPLE TO REASON IN THAT LAND.’ I wish I could take you by the hand and lead you

## THE HILLS OF HOME

away into its pleasant boundaries. There is no custom-house on the frontier, and you may take in what books you will. There are no manners and customs; but men and women grow up, like trees in a still, well-walled garden, 'at their own sweet will' There is no prescribed or customary folly—no motley, cap, or bauble: out of the well of each one's own innate absurdity he is allowed and encouraged freely to draw and to communicate; and it is a strange thing how this natural fooling comes so nigh to one's better thoughts of wisdom; and stranger still, that all this discord of people speaking in their own natural moods and keys, masses itself into a far more perfect harmony than all the dismal, official unison in which they sing in other countries. Parting-singing seems best all the world over."

**I**N MANY THINGS HE MUST be measured very largely by his heart. Though he laughed at churches he did not laugh at the principle which was behind them, for he was a child of his race and of his family. And he had not a snigger in his laughter. He had besides, a quick conscience. The chimes at midnight might stir one side of it, but the bells of the faith of his fathers as often moved the other and the deeper side. He had also the restless impulse of his race. He had the instinct of action, and more than once he cried out, "Oh that I had been a soldier!" He was, indeed, a man of action, tied by the leg to a sick bed.

No matter how the evanescent critics girded at the written thing of this man's soul, which was to abide when they and their gird were gone, he was happy in the possession of the unswerving confidence of

## THE HILLS OF HOME

faithful friends, and these also, "namely" people too, who knew well the quality of that in which they were trusting. He knew, of course, that confidence to be the most valuable and at the same time the most terrible possession of the human heart; for what if it one day got its eyes opened, also, to the possible truth that what it valued at so high an estimate were really fustian wind-blown, for a brief day's littleness? Their confidence in him, however, proved to be correct. Time has justified it.

His charm was intensely personal. Like Burns he possessed an innate distinction of personal grace which found expression in his words. His beauty of eye, and the charm of his face, where expressions and feelings were evanescent and pursuant as the wind-wave over the wheat, marked him out from the common ruck of man. And his written style was the natural embodiment of his personality.

Stevenson's power of vivid singular



## THE HILLS OF HOME

flashlight vision was indeed his very own. His whole was apt to consist of a succession of individual scenes, revealed in splendidly forcible pictature. This is, of course, the result of deliberate devotion to his art, the nurture of his gift, the polishing development of his medium. The issue is the unique grace and precision of his workmanship. Light, lambent and pure, plays about his sentences. His words are like flowers and stars. His paragraphs are rich tapestries, to pull a single thread from which would be to damage the fabric. Sometimes his style is as close as that of Thucydides. Besides, his genius is as versatile and various as the moods of his native climate. The novel, the prose-poem, the epistle, the parable, above all the essay, reflecting aspects of Nature and of the soul's life and conduct. Hence it is that his charm is such as perennially attracts, with new phases of freshness on each renewal. Yet, while he reveals his heart he does not

## THE HILLS OF HOME

uncover his nakedness. His confidences are clean. He is a gentleman.

One thing needs to be clearly said, and firmly declared. He did not pose as an invalid. He would have liked nothing so little as being set up before even an admiring public, wrapt in a blanket, a bandage round his head, and a packet of cough drops, duly labelled, on his lap. Himself said: "To me the medicine bottles on my chimney and the blood on my handkerchief are accidents. They do not colour my view of life, and I should think myself a trifler, and in bad taste, if I introduced the world to these unimportant trifles." He would hate to have his biography a series of bulletins.

Notwithstanding his experiences with health, or rather with the want of it, his youth was entirely immortal; his soul could do a back somersault into his childhood years. Even with the blood-stained handkerchief at his lips he was an optim-

## THE HILLS OF HOME

ist. No man had a cheerier laugh with which to meet his interviews with Death. He never liked to put Death out of countenance by making him feel that he was an unwelcome caller. Yet, Death himself must often have felt awkward in the chamber of such a man. Tears were near his laughter too. A curious pixie lived in hiding-holes of his heart. His soul was an Ariel.

His opinion of himself was all the while much more modest than that which was in the scrap-book of the gods. His name is still one for leaded type. There is a sheen of its own about it. He had, in himself, and in his character, a familiar personal power to interest, to attach, and to charm. He was an attractive inspiration, for he possessed in rare degree what appeals to universal and primitive sources of racial imagination. His genius was by nature fastidious and artistically modelled. His work in general has many master-touches

## THE HILLS OF HOME

of inner revelation. The keys of the soul are touched with master hand in the delineation of his characters. His work is truest literature, master-pieces of thought, moulded on the deepest feelings of the universal heart.

The world's verdict on his work has modified its early utterances in the direction of extended praise and deepening appreciation. Sir John Millais knew what he was saying when he declared, "Nobody living can see with such an eye as that fellow, and nobody is such a master of his tools."

Sometimes he reveals the inner character of a man by a flash upon its integument. Thus, how vividly one can see Markheim, as in a verbal cartoon, with "the haggard lift of his upper lip through which his teeth looked out." Or you find his scorn for the mock religious hypocrite, admirably touched into the concrete, in his picture of Tod Lapraik—"a muckle

## THE HILLS OF HOME

fat white hash of a man like creish, wi' a kind of a holy smile that gar'd me scunner."

There always was a coterie of knowledge who were convinced of his true artistry. Himself knew all the while, too, what he was seeking. He was extremely sensitive to phrase. To a friend he says:

"I hope you don't dislike reading bad style like this as much as I do writing it; it hurts me when neither words nor clauses fall into their places, much as it would hurt you to sing when you had a bad cold and your voice deceived you, and missed every other note."

He was, as we have seen, only too ready to attribute the source of his excellencies to others, for he was poor, and his soul was like a shallop tumbling in the trough of great dark waves, in which he had frequent doubt of himself. "I have given up all hope," he writes, "all fancy rather, of making literature my hold; I see that

## THE HILLS OF HOME

I have not capacity enough." It sounds strange to us to-day!

He was blamed and censured for being an egotist; but his egotism had the charming innocence of a child's about it. The world that entered by his eyes flowed through his heart into utterance. There is a Scoto-Frenchness in many of his emotions, as when he writes:

"The first violet. . . . I do not think so small a thing has ever given me such a princely festival of pleasure. I feel as if my heart were a little bunch of violets in my bosom; and my brain is pleasantly intoxicated with the wonderful odour. . . . It is like a wind blowing to one out of fairy-land."

In fact, this kind of egotism is the ground root of the essayist's labour. The world is going on round about him, big and noisy; but the essayist, instinctively and by right of his egotism, button-holes the world, and leads it into a side place,

## THE HILLS OF HOME

especially to a place, if possible, penetrated by the sound of running water. He says in effect what Stevenson says in fact: "I cannot write in any sense of the word, but I am as happy as can be, and I wish to notify the fact before it passes."

He loved the children, and nothing delighted him more than to share in the creation of sport for them. Childlike also was his love of appreciation. It was withheld from him long enough, and when it did come in little preliminary drops into his heart it was received with real gratitude. He appreciated above everything the approval of common people, for the truest critic, after all, is the common universal man. He liked to receive criticism, but certain criticisms annoyed him, especially when he is "down in health, wealth, and fortune." He begs Henley, "Never, please, delay such confidences any more. If they come quickly they are a help, if they come after long silences they feel

## THE HILLS OF HOME

almost like a taunt."

He resistantly wriggles under certain forms of stricture. But he has confidence in the vision and the impulse which masterfully impel him to write. "I do not care," he says. "There is something in me worth saying, though I cannot find what it is just yet; and, ere I die, if I do not die too fast, I shall write something worth the boards, which with scarce an exception I have not yet done." Yet he had written, *A Lodging for the Night*, the best picture of sixteenth-century Paris with François Villon in it, that could be done by any man living or dead, with *Will o' the Mill*, and *Providence and the Guitar!*

He was not good at making a mercenary bargain, hence he experienced the traditional anxieties of the poverty of authors. He touched cash arrangements gingerly with a shrinking finger.

"I hate myself for being always on business. But I cannot help my fears,



## THE HILLS OF HOME

anxieties about money. . . . Now I am fighting with both hands a hard battle, and my work, while it will be as good as I can make it, will probably be worth twopence." How blind is genius always to investment potencies. How hunger hinders the calculation of profits while only provoking the "liberty of prophesying"!

And now he needs to ask for nothing. Time is giving him, every passing day, a more abiding reward. Wheresoever he did a day's thinking, writing or suffering, has become a place to be remembered. And no place, except that hill-top where his dust lies sleeping, is more transfused with the remembrance of his spirit than the grey streets of Edinburgh, and the quiet

"Hills of Home."



# THE PENTLAND ESSAYS



PENTLAND ESSAY  
NUMBER ONE



**T**O LEAVE HOME IN early life is to be stunned and quickened with novelties; but when years have come, it only casts a more endearing light upon the past. As in those composite photographs of Mr Galton's, the image of each new sitter brings out but the more clearly the central features of the race; when once youth has flown, each new impression only deepens the sense of nationality and the desire of native places. So may some cadet of Royal Écossais or the Albany Regiment, as he mounted guard about French citadels, so may some officer marching his company of the Scots-Dutch among the polders, have felt the soft rains of the Hebrides upon his brow, or started in the ranks at the remembered aroma of peat-smoke. And the rivers of home are dear in particular to all men. This is as old as Naaman, who was jealous for Abana

## THE HILLS OF HOME

and Pharpar; it is confined to no race nor country, for I know one of Scottish blood but a child of Suffolk, whose fancy still lingers about the lilled lowland waters of that shire. But the streams of Scotland are incomparable in themselves—or I am only the more Scottish to suppose so—and their sound and colour dwell for ever in the memory. How often and willingly do I not look again in fancy on Tummel, or Manor, or the talking Airdle, or Dee swirling in its Lynn; on the bright burn of Kinnaird, or the golden burn that pours and sulks in the den behind Kingussie! I think shame to leave out one of these enchantresses, but the list would grow too long if I remembered all; only I may not forget Allan Water, nor birch-wetting Rogie, nor yet Almond; nor, for all its pollutions, that Water of Leith of the many and well-named mills—Bell's Mills, and Canon Mills, and Silver Mills; nor Redford Burn of pleasant memories; nor yet, for all its smallness, that



## PASTORAL

nameless trickle that springs in the green bosom of Allermuir, and is fed from Halkerside with a perennial teacupful, and threads the moss under the Shearer's Knowe, and makes one pool there, overhung by a rock, where I loved to sit and make bad verses, and is then kidnapped in its infancy by subterranean pipes for the service of the sea-beholding city in the plain. From many points in the moss you may see at one glance its whole course and that of all its tributaries; the geographer of this Lilliput may visit all its corners without sitting down, and not yet begin to be breathed; Shearer's Knowe and Halkerside are but names of adjacent cantons on a single shoulder of a hill, as names are squandered (it would seem to the inexperienced, in superfluity) upon these upland sheepwalks; a bucket would receive the whole discharge of the toy river; it would take in an appreciable time to fill your morning bath; for the most part, besides, it soaks unseen through

## THE HILLS OF HOME

the moss; and yet for the sake of auld lang syne, and the figure of a certain *genius loci*, I am condemned to linger awhile in fancy by its shores; and if the nymph (who cannot be above a span in stature) will but inspire my pen, I would gladly carry the reader along with me.

John Tod, when I knew him, was already "the oldest herd on the Pentlands," and had been all his days faithful to that curlew-scattering, sheep-collecting life. He remembered the droving days, when the drove roads, that now lie green and solitary through the heather, were thronged thoroughfares. He had himself often marched flocks into England, sleeping on the hillsides with his caravan; and by his account it was a rough business not without danger. The drove roads lay apart from habitation; the drovers met in the wilderness, as to-day the deep-sea fishers meet off the banks in the solitude of the Atlantic; and in the one as in the other case rough







JOHN R. D.

and also a small dog, which is the same as the one in the picture above.



## PASTORAL

habits and first-law were the rule. Crimes were committed, sheep filched, and drovers robbed and beaten; most of which offences had a moorland burial and were never heard of in the courts of justice. John, in those days, was at least once attacked,—by two men after his watch,—and at least once, betrayed by his habitual anger, fell under the danger of the law and was clapped into some rustic prison-house, the doors of which he burst in the night and was no more heard of in that quarter. When I knew him, his life had fallen in quieter places, and he had no cares beyond the dullness of his dogs and the inroads of pedestrians from town. But for a man of his propensity to wrath these were enough; he knew neither rest nor peace, except by snatches, in the grey of the summer morning, and already from far up the hill, he would wake the “toun” with the sound of his shoutings; and in the lambing time, his cries were not yet silenced late at night. This wrathful voice

## THE HILLS OF HOME

of a man unseen might be said to haunt that quarter of the Pentlands, an audible bogie; and no doubt it added to the fear in which men stood of John a touch of something legendary. For my own part, he was at first my enemy, and I, in my character of a rambling boy, his natural abhorrence. It was long before I saw him near at hand, knowing him only by some sudden blast of bellowing from far above, bidding me "c'way oot amang the sheep." The quietest recesses of the hill harboured this ogre; I skulked in my favourite wilderness like a Cameronian of the Killing Time, and John Tod was my Claverhouse, and his dogs my questing dragoons. Little by little we dropped into civilities; his hail at sight of me began to have less of the ring of a war-slogan; soon, we never met but he produced his snuff-box, which was with him, like the calumet with the Red Indian, a part of heraldry of peace; and at length, in the ripeness of time, we grew to be a pair of friends, and



## PASTORAL

when I lived alone in these parts of the winter, it was a settled thing for John to "give me a cry" over the garden wall as he set forth upon his evening round, and for me to overtake him and bear him company.

That dread voice of his that shook the hills when he was angry, fell in ordinary talk very pleasantly upon the ear, with a kind of honied, friendly whine, not far off singing, that was eminently Scottish. He laughed not very often, and when he did, with a sudden, loud haw-haw, hearty but somehow joyless, like an echo from a rock. His face was permanently set and coloured; ruddy and stiff with weathering; more like a picture than a face; yet with a certain strain and a threat of latent anger in the expression, like that of a man trained too fine and harassed with perpetual vigilance. He spoke in the richest dialect of Scotch I ever heard; the words in themselves were a pleasure and often a surprise to me, so that I often came back from one of our pa-

## THE HILLS OF HOME

trols with new acquisitions; and this vocabulary he would handle like a master, stalking a little before me, "beard on shoulder," the plaid hanging loosely about him, the yellow staff clapped under his arm, and guiding me uphill by that devious, tactical ascent which seems peculiar to men of his trade. I might count him with the best talkers; only that talking Scotch and talking English seem incomparable acts. He touched on nothing at least, but he adorned it; when he narrated, the scene was before you; when he spoke (as he did mostly) of his own antique business, the thing took on a colour of romance and curiosity that was surprising. The clans of sheep with their particular territories on the hill, and how, in the yearly killings and purchases, each must be proportionally thinned and strengthened; the midnight busyness of animals, the signs of the weather, the cares of the snowy season, the exquisite stupidity of sheep, the exquisite cunning of dogs:

## PASTORAL

all these he could present so humanly, and with so much old experience and living gusto, that weariness was excluded. And in the midst he would suddenly straighten his bowed back, the stick would fly abroad in demonstration, and the sharp thunder of his voice roll out a long itinerary for the dogs, so that you saw at last the use of that great wealth of names for every knowe and howe upon the hillside; and the dogs, having hearkened with lowered tails and raised faces, would run up their flags again to the masthead and spread themselves upon the indicated circuit. It used to fill me with wonder how they could follow and retain so long a story. But John denied these creatures all intelligence; they were the constant butt of his passion and contempt; it was just possible to work with the like of them, he said,—not more than possible. And then he would expand upon the subject of the really good dogs that he had known, and the one really good dog that

## THE HILLS OF HOME

he had himself possessed. He had been offered forty pounds for it; but a good col-lie was worth more than that, more than anything, to a "herd"; he did the herd's work for him. "As for the like of them!" he would cry, and scornfully indicate the scouring tails of his assistants.

Once—I translate John's Lallan, for I cannot do it justice, being born *Britannis in montibus*, indeed, but alas! *inerudito sæculo*—once, in the days of his good dog, he had bought some sheep in Edinburgh, and on the way out, the road being crowded, two were lost. This was a reproach to John, and a slur upon the dog; and both were alive to their misfortune. Word came, after some days, that a farmer about Braid had found a pair of sheep; and thither went John and the dog to ask for restitution. But the farmer was a hard man and stood upon his rights. "How were they marked?" he asked; and since John had bought right and left from many sellers and had no notion

## PASTORAL

of the marks—"Very well," said the farmer, "then it's only right that I should keep them."—"Well," said John, "it's a fact that I cannae tell the sheep; but if my dog can, will ye let me have them?" The farmer was honest as well as hard, and besides I daresay he had little fear of the ordeal; so he had all the sheep upon his farm into one large park, and turned John's dog into their midst. That hairy man of business knew his errand well; he knew that John and he had bought two sheep and (to their shame) lost them about Boroughmuirhead; he knew besides (the Lord knows how, unless by listening) that they were come to Braid for their recovery; and without pause or blunder singled out, first one and then another, the two waifs. It was that afternoon the forty pounds were offered and refused. And the shepherd and his dog—what do I say? the true shepherd and his man—set off together by Fairmilehead in jocund humour, and "smiled to ither" all the way

## THE HILLS OF HOME

home, with the two recovered ones before them. So far, so good; but intelligence may be abused. The dog, as he is by little man's inferior in mind, is only by little his superior in virtue; and John had another collie tale of quite a different complexion. At the foot of the moss behind Kirk Yetton (Caer Ketton, wise men say) there is a scrog of low wood and a pool with a dam for washing sheep. John was one day lying under a bush in the scrog, when he was aware of a collie on the far hillside skulking down through the deepest of the heather with obtrusive stealth. He knew the dog; knew him for a clever, rising practitioner from quite a distant farm; one whom perhaps he had coveted as he saw him masterfully steering flocks to market. But what did the practitioner so far from home? and why this guilty and secret manœuvring towards the pool?—for it was towards the pool that he was heading. John lay the closer under his bush, and presently saw the dog come forth

## PASTORAL

upon the margin, look all about him to see if he were anywhere observed, plunge in and repeatedly wash himself overhead and ears, and then (but now openly and with tail in air) strike homeward over the hills. That same night word was sent his master, and the rising practitioner, shaken up from where he lay, all innocence, before the fire, was had out to a dykeside and promptly shot; for alas! he was that foulest of criminals under trust, a sheep-eater; and it was from the maculation of sheep's blood that he had come so far to cleanse himself in the pool behind Kirk Yetton.

A trade that touches nature, one that lies at the foundations of life, in which we have all had ancestors employed, so that on a hint of it ancestral memories revive, lends itself to literary use, vocal or written. The fortune of a tale lies not alone in the skill of him that writes, but as much, perhaps, in the inherited experience of him who reads; and when I hear with a partic-

## THE HILLS OF HOME

ular thrill of things that I have never done or seen, it is one of that innumerable army of my ancestors rejoicing in past deeds. Thus novels begin to touch not the fine *dilettanti* but the gross mass of mankind, when they leave off to speak of parlours and shades of manner and still-born niceties of motive, and begin to deal with fighting, sailing, adventure, death or childbirth; and thus ancient outdoor crafts and occupations, whether Mr Hardy wields the shepherd's crook or Count Tolstoi swings the scythe, lift romance into a near neighbourhood with epic. These aged things have on them the dew of man's morning; they lie near, not so much to us, the semi-artificial flowerets, as to the trunk and aboriginal taproot of the race. A thousand interests spring up in the process of the ages, and a thousand perish; that is now an eccentricity or a lost art which was once the fashion of an empire; and those only are perennial matters that rouse us to-day,



## PASTORAL

and that roused men in all epochs of the past. There is a certain critic, not indeed of execution but of matter, whom I dare be known to set before the best: a certain low-browed, hairy gentleman, at first a percher in the fork of trees, next (as they relate) a dweller in caves, and whom I think I see squatting in cave-mouths, of a pleasant afternoon, to munch his berries—his wife, that accomplished lady, squatting by his side: his name I never heard, but he is often described as Probably Arboreal, which may serve for recognition. Each has his own tree of ancestors, but at the top of all sits Probably Arboreal; in all our veins there runs some minim of his old, wild, tree-top blood; our civilised nerves still tingle with his rude terrors and pleasures; and to that which would have moved our common ancestor, all must obediently thrill.

We have not so far to climb to come to shepherds; and it may be I had one for an ascendant who has largely moulded me.

## THE HILLS OF HOME

But yet I think I owe my taste for that hill-side business rather to the art and interest of John Tod. He it was that made it live for me, as the artist can make all things live. It was through him the simple strategy of massing sheep upon a snowy evening, with its attendant scampering of earnest, shaggy aides-de-camp, was an affair that I never wearied of seeing, and that I never weary of recalling to mind: the shadow of the night darkening on the hills, inscrutable black blotsof snow shower moving here and there like night already come, huddles of yellow sheep and dartings of black dogs upon the snow, a bitter air that took you by the throat, unearthly harpings of the wind along the moors; and for centre piece to all these features and influences, John winding up the brae, keeping his captain's eye upon all sides, and breaking, ever and again, into a spasm of bellowing that seemed to make the evening bleaker. It is thus that I still see him in my mind's eye, perched on a

## PASTORAL

hump of the declivity not far from Halker-  
side, his staff in airy flourish, his great voice  
taking hold upon the hills and echoing ter-  
ror to the lowlands; I, meanwhile, standing  
somewhat back, until the fit should be over,  
and, with a pinch of snuff, my friend relapse  
into his easy, even conversation.



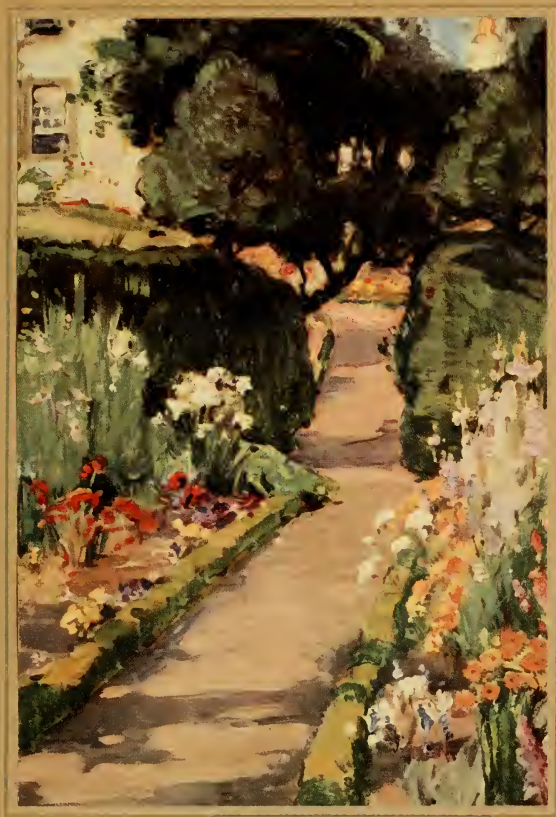












THE GARDEN—SWANSON COFFAGE  
1890. 1891. 1892. 1893. 1894. 1895. 1896. 1897. 1898. 1899. 1900.



PENTLAND ESSAY  
NUMBER TWO



AN OLD SCOTCH GARDENER  
PENTLAND ESSAY TWO  
BY ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

I THINK I MIGHT ALMOST have said the last: somewhere, indeed, in the uttermost glens of the Lamm-ermuir or among the south-western hills there may yet linger a decrepid representative of this bygone good fellowship; but as far as actual experience goes, I have only met one man in my life who might fitly be quoted in the same breath with Andrew Fair service,—though without his vices. He was a man whose very presence could impart a savour of quaint antiquity to the baldest and most modern flower-pots. There was a dignity about his tall stooping form, and an earnestness in his wrinkled face that recalled Don Quixote; but a Don Quixote who had come through the training of the Covenant, and been nourished in his youth on *Walker's Lives* and *The Hind let Loose*.

Now, as I could not bear to let such a man

## THE HILLS OF HOME

pass away with no sketch preserved of his old-fashioned virtues, I hope the reader will take this as an excuse for the present paper, and judge as kindly as he can the infirmities of my description. To me, who find it so difficult to tell the little that I know, he stands essentially as a *genius loci*. It is impossible to separate his spare form and old straw hat from the garden in the lap of the hill, with its rocks overgrown with clematis, its shadowy walks, and the splendid breadth of champaign that one saw from the north-west corner. The garden and gardener seem part and parcel of each other. When I take him from his right surroundings and try to make him appear for me on paper, he looks unreal and phantasmal; the best that I can say may convey some notion to those that never saw him, but to me it will be ever impotent.

The first time that I saw him, I fancy Robert was pretty old already: he had certainly begun to use his years as a stalking

## OLD SCOTCH GARDENER

horse. Latterly he was beyond all the impudencies of logic, considering a reference to the parish register worth all the reasons in the world. "*I am old and well stricken in years,*" he was wont to say; and I never found any one bold enough to answer the argument. Apart from this vantage that he kept over all who were not yet octogenarian, he had some other drawbacks as a gardener. He shrank the very place he cultivated. The dignity and reduced gentility of his appearance made the small garden cut a sorry figure. He was full of tales of greater situations in his younger days. He spoke of castles and parks with a humbling familiarity. He told of places where under-gardeners had trembled at his looks, where there were meres and swanneries, labyrinths of walk and wildernesses of sad shrubbery in his control, till you could not help feeling that it was condescension on his part to dress your humbler garden plots. You were thrown at once into an invidious

## THE HILLS OF HOME

position. You felt that you were profiting by the needs of dignity, and that his poverty and not his will consented to your vulgar rule. Involuntarily you compared yourself with the swineherd that made Alfred watch his cakes, or some bloated citizen who may have given his sons and his condescension to the fallen Dionysius. Nor were the disagreeables purely fanciful and metaphysical, for the sway that he exercised over your feelings he extended to your garden, and, through the garden, to your diet. He would trim a hedge, throw away a favourite plant, or fill the most favoured and fertile section of the garden with a vegetable that none of us could eat, in supreme contempt for our opinion. If you asked him to send you in one of your own artichokes, "*That I wull, mem,*" he would say, "*with pleasure, for it is mair blessed to give than to receive.*" Ay, and even when, by extra twisting of the screw, we prevailed on him to prefer our commands to his own inclina-



## OLD SCOTCH GARDENER

tion, and he went away, stately and sad, professing that "*our will was his pleasure*," but yet reminding us that he would do it "*with feelin's*,"—even then, I say, the triumphant master felt humbled in his triumph, felt that he ruled on sufferance only, that he was taking a mean advantage of the other's low estate, and that the whole scene had been one of those "slights that patient merit of the unworthy takes."

In flowers his taste was old-fashioned and catholic; affecting sunflowers and dahlias, wallflowers and roses, and holding in supreme aversion whatsoever was fantastic, new-fashioned or wild. There was one exception to this sweeping ban. Foxgloves, though undoubtedly guilty on the last count, he not only spared, but loved; and when the shubbery was being thinned, he stayed his hand and dexterously manipulated his bill in order to save every stately stem. In boyhood, as he told me once, speaking in that tone that only actors and the old-

## THE HILLS OF HOME

fashioned common folk can use nowadays, his heart grew "*proud*" within him when he came on a burn-course among the braes of Manor that shone purple with their graceful trophies; and not all his apprenticeship and practice for so many years of precise gardening had banished these boyish recollections from his heart. Indeed, he was a man keenly alive to the beauty of all that was bygone. He abounded in old stories of his boyhood, and kept pious account of all his former pleasures; and when he went (on a holiday) to visit one of the fabled great places of the earth where he had served before, he came back full of little pre-Raphaelite reminiscences that showed real passion for the past, such as might have shaken hands with Hazlitt or Jean-Jacques.

But however his sympathy with his old feelings might affect his liking for the fox-gloves, the very truth was that he scorned all flowers together. They were but gar-

## OLD SCOTCH GARDENER

nishings, childish toys, trifling ornaments for ladies' chimney-shelves. It was towards his cauliflowers and peas and cabbage that his heart grew warm. His preference for the more useful growths was such that cabbages were found invading the flower-pots, and an outpost of savoys was once discovered in the centre of the lawn. He would prelect over some thriving plant with wonderful enthusiasm, piling reminiscence on reminiscence of former and perhaps yet finer specimens. Yet even then he did not let the credit leave himself. He had, indeed, raised "*finer o' them*"; but it seemed that no one else had been favoured with a like success. All other gardeners, in fact, were mere foils to his own superior attainments; and he would recount, with perfect soberness of voice and visage, how so and so had wondered, and such another could scarcely give credit to his eyes. Nor was it with his rivals only that he parted praise and blame. If you remarked how well a plant

## THE HILLS OF HOME

was looking, he would gravely touch his hat and thank you with solemn unction; all credit in the matter falling to him. If, on the other hand, you called his attention to some back-going vegetable, he would quote Scripture: "*Paul may plant and Apollos may water*"; all blame being left to Providence, on the score of deficient rain or untimely frosts.

There was one thing in the garden that shared his preference with his favourite cabbages and rhubarb, and that other was the beehive. Their sound, their industry, perhaps their sweet product also, had taken hold of his imagination and heart, whether by way of memory or no I cannot say, although perhaps the bees too were linked to him by some recollection of Manorbraes and his country childhood. Nevertheless, he was too chary of his personal safety or (let me rather say) his personal dignity to mingle in any active office towards them. But he could stand by while one of the con-

## OLD SCOTCH GARDENER

temned rivals did the work for him, and protest that it was quite safe in spite of his own considerate distance and the cries of the distressed assistant. In regard to bees, he was rather a man of word than deed, and some of his most striking sentences had the bees for text. "*They are indeed wonderfu' creatures, mem,*" he said once. "*They just mind me o' what the Queen of Sheba said to Solomon—and I think she said it wi' a sigh,—‘The half of it hath not been told unto me.’*"

As far as the Bible goes, he was deeply read, like the old Covenanters, of whom he was the worthy representative, his mouth was full of sacred quotations; it was the book that he had studied most and thought upon most deeply. To many people in his station the Bible, and perhaps Burns, are the only books of any vital literary merit that they read, feeding themselves, for the rest, on the draff of country newspapers, and the very instructive but not very palatable pa-

## THE HILLS OF HOME

bulum of some cheap educational series. This was Robert's position. All day long he haddreamed of the Hebrew stories, and his head had been full of Hebrew poetry and Gospel ethics; until they had struck deep root into his heart, and the very expressions had become a part of him; so that herarely spoke without some antique idiom or Scripture mannerism that gave a raciness to the merest trivialities of talk. But the influence of the Bible did not stop here. There was more in Robert than quaint phrase and ready store of reference. He was imbued with a spirit of peace and love: he interposed between man and wife: he threw himself between the angry, touching his hat the while with all the ceremony of an usher: he protected the birds from every body but himself, seeing, I suppose, a great difference between official execution and wanton sport. His mistress telling him one day to put some ferns into his master's particular corner, and adding, "Though, in-

## OLD SCOTCH GARDENER

deed, Robert, he doesn't deserve them, for he wouldn't help me to gather them," "*Eh mem,*" replies Robert, "*but I wouldnae say that, for I think he's just a most deservin' gentleman.*" Again, two of our friends, who were on intimate terms, and accustomed to use language to each other, somewhat without the bounds of the parliamentary, happened to differ about the position of a seat in the garden. The discussion, as was usual when these two were at it, soon waxed tolerably insulting on both sides. Every one accustomed to such controversies several times a day was quietly enjoying this prize-fight of somewhat abusive wit—everyone but Robert, to whom the perfect good faith of the whole quarrel seemed unquestionable, and who, after having waited till his conscience would suffer him to wait no more, and till he expected every moment that the disputants would fall to blows, cut suddenly in with tones of almost tearful entreaty: "*Eh, but, gentlemen, I wad hae nae*

## THE HILLS OF HOME

*mair words about it!*" One thing was noticeable about Robert's religion: it was neither dogmatic nor sectarian. He never expatiated (at least, in my hearing) on the doctrines of his creed, and he never condemned anybody else. I have no doubt that he held all Roman Catholics, Atheists, and Mahometans as considerably out of it; I don't believe he had any sympathy for Prelacy; and the natural feelings of man must have made him a little sore about Free-Churchism; but at least, he never talked about these views, never grew controversially noisy, and never openly aspersed the belief or practice of anybody. Now all this is not generally characteristic of Scotch piety; Scotch sects being churches militant with a vengeance, and Scotch believers perpetual crusaders the one against the other, and missionaries the one to the other. Perhaps Robert's originally tender heart was what made the difference; or, perhaps, his solitary and pleasant labour among



## OLD SCOTCH GARDENER

fruits and flowers had taught him a more sunshiny creed than those whose work is among the tares of fallen humanity; and the soft influences of the garden had entered deep into his spirit,

“Annihilating all that’s made  
To a green thought in a green shade.”

But I could go on for ever chronicling his golden sayings or telling of his innocent and living piety. I had meant to tell of his cottage with the German pipe hung reverently above the fire, and the shell box that he had made for his son, and of which he would say pathetically: “*He was real pleased wi’ it at first, but I think he’s got a kind o’ tired o’ it now*”—the son being then a man of about forty. But I will let all these pass. “’Tis more significant: he’s dead.” The earth, that he had digged so much in his life, was dug out by another for himself; and the flowers that he had tended drew their life still from him, but in a new and nearer way. A bird flew about the open

183

## THE HILLS OF HOME

grave as if it too wished to honour the obsequies of one who had so often quoted Scripture in favour of its kind: "Are not two sparrows sold for one farthing, and yet not one of them falleth to the ground."

Yes, he is dead. But the kings did not rise in the place of death to greet him "with taunting proverbs" as they rose to greet the haughty Babylonian; for in his life he was lowly, and a peacemaker and a servant of God.







THE MANSE

A. 1848. The house of the Rev. Mr. M. W. Turner, in the city of London.









THE MANSE PENTLAND ESSAY  
NUMBER THREE

I HAVE NAMED, AMONG many rivers that make music in my memory, that dirty Water of Leith. Often and often I desire to look upon it again; and the choice of a point of view is easy to me. It should be at a certain water-door, embowered in shrubbery. The river is there dammed back for the service of the flour-mill just below, so that it lies deep and darkling, and the sand slopes into brown obscurity with a glint of gold, and it has but newly been recruited by the borrowings of the snuff-mill just above, and these, tumbling merrily in, shake the pool to its black heart, fill it with drowsy eddies, and set the curded froth of many other mills solemnly steering to and fro upon the surface. Or so it was when I was young; for change, and the masons, and the pruning-knife, have been busy; and if I could hope to repeat a cherished experience, it must be on many and impossible

189

## THE HILLS OF HOME

conditions. I must choose, as well as the point of view, a certain moment in my growth, so that the scale may be exaggerated, and the trees on the steep opposite side may seem to climb to heaven, and the sand by the water-door, where I am standing, seem as low as Styx. And I must choose the season also, so that the valley may be brimmed like a cup with sunshine and the songs of birds;—and the year of grace, so that when I turn to leave the riverside I may find the old manse and its inhabitants unchanged.

It was a place in that time like no other: the garden cut into provinces by a great hedge of beech, and overlooked by the church and the terrace of the churchyard, where the tombstones were thick, and after nightfall “spunkies” might be seen to dance at least by children; flower-plots lying warm in sunshine; laurels and the great yew making elsewhere a pleasing horror of shade; the smell of water rising

## THE MANSE

from all round, with an added tang of paper-mills; the sound of water everywhere, and the sound of mills—the wheel and the dam singing their alternate strain; the birds on every bush and from every corner of the overhanging woods pealing out their notes until the air throbbed with them; and in the midst of this, the manse. I see it, by the standard of my childish stature, as a great and roomy house. In truth, it was not so large as I supposed, nor yet so convenient, and, standing where it did, it is difficult to suppose that it was healthful. Yet a large family of stalwart sons and tall daughters were housed and reared, and came to man and womanhood in that nest of little chambers; so that the face of the earth was peppered with the children of the manse, and letters with outlandish stamps became familiar to the local postman, and the walls of the little chambers brightened with the wonders of the East. The dullest could see this was a

## THE HILLS OF HOME

house that had a pair of hands in divers foreign places: a well-beloved house—its image fondly dwelt on by many travellers.

Here lived an ancestor of mine, who was a herd of men. I read him, judging with older criticism the report of childish observation, as a man of singular simplicity of nature; unemotional, and hating the display of what he felt; standing contented on the old ways; a lover of his life and innocent habits to the end. We children admired him: partly for his beautiful face and silver hair, for none more than children are concerned for beauty and, above all, for beauty in the old; partly for the solemn light in which we beheld him once a week, the observed of all observers, in the pulpit. But his strictness and distance, the effect, I now fancy, of old age, slow blood, and settled habit, oppressed us with a kind of terror. When not abroad, he sat much alone, writing sermons or letters to his scattered family in a dark and

## THE MANSE

cold room with a library of bloodless books—or so they seemed in those days, although I have some of them now on my own shelves and like well enough to read them; and these lonely hours wrapped him in the greater gloom for our imaginations. But the study had a redeeming grace in many Indian pictures, gaudily coloured and dear to young eyes. I cannot depict (for I have no such passions now) the greed with which I beheld them; and when I was once sent in to say a psalm to my grandfather, I went, quaking indeed with fear, but at the same time glowing with hope that, if I said it well, he might reward me with an Indian picture.

“Thy foot He’ll not let slide, nor will  
He slumber that thee keeps,”

it ran: a strange conglomerate of the unpronounceable, a sad model to set in childhood before one who was himself to be a versifier, and a task in recitation that really merited reward. And I must suppose

## THE HILLS OF HOME

the old man thought so too, and was either touched or amused by the performance; for he took me in his arms with most unwonted tenderness, and kissed me, and gave me a little kindly sermon for my psalm; so that, for that day, we were clerk and parson. I was struck by this reception into so tender a surprise that I forgot my disappointment. And indeed the hope was one of those that childhood forges for a pastime, and with no design upon reality. Nothing was more unlikely than that my grandfather should strip himself of one of those pictures, love-gifts and reminders of his absent sons; nothing more unlikely than that he should bestow it upon me. He had no idea of spoiling children, leaving all that to my aunt; he had fared hard himself, and blubbered under the rod in the last century; and his ways were still Spartan for the young. The last word I heard upon his lips was in this Spartan key. He had over-walked in the teeth of an east wind, and was now near the

## THE MANSE

end of his many days. He sat by the dining-room fire, with his white hair, pale face and bloodshot eyes, a somewhat awful figure; and my aunt had given him a dose of our good old Scotch medicine, Dr Gregory's powder. Now that remedy, as the work of a near kinsman of Rob Roy himself, may have a savour of romance for the imagination; but it comes uncouthly to the palate. The old gentleman had taken it with a wry face; and that being accomplished, sat with perfect simplicity, like a child's, munching a "barley-sugar kiss." But when my aunt, having the canister open in her hands, proposed to let me share in the sweets, he interfered at once. I had no Gregory; then I should have no barley-sugar kiss: so he decided with a touch of irritation. And just then the phaeton coming opportunely to the kitchen door—for such was our unlordly fashion—I was taken for the last time from the presence of my grandfather.

## THE HILLS OF HOME

Now I often wonder what I have inherited from this old minister. I must suppose, indeed, that he was fond of preaching sermons, and so am I, though I never heard it maintained that either of us loved to hear them. He sought health in his youth in the Isle of Wight, and I have sought it in both hemispheres; but whereas he found and kept it, I am still on the quest. He was a great lover of Shakespeare, whom he read aloud, I have been told, with taste; well, I love my Shakespeare also, and am persuaded I can read him well, though I own I never have been told so. He made embroidery, designing his own patterns; and in that kind of work I never made anything but a kettle-holder in Berlin wool, and an odd garter of knitting, which was as black as the chimney before I had done with it. He loved port, and nuts, and porter; and so do I, but they agreed better with my grandfather, which seems to me a breach of contract. He had chalk-stones in his fingers;



## THE MANSE

and these, in good time, I may possibly inherit, but I would much rather have inherited his noble presence. Try as I please, I cannot join myself with the reverend doctor; and all the while, no doubt, and even as I write the phrase, he moves in my blood, and whispers words to me, and sits efficient in the very knot and centre of my being. In his garden, as I played there, I learned the love of mills—or had I an ancestor a miller?—and a kindness for the neighbourhood of graves, as homely things not without their poetry—or had I an ancestor sexton? But what of the garden where he played himself?—for that, too, was the scene of my education. Some part of me played therein the eighteenth century, and ran races under the green avenue at Pilrig; some part of me trudged up Leith Walk, which was still a country place, and sat on the High School benches, and was thrashed, perhaps, by Dr Adam. The house where I spent my youth was not yet thought upon; but we made

## THE HILLS OF HOME

holiday parties among the cornfields on its site, and ate strawberries and cream near by at a gardener's. All this I had forgotten; only my grandfather remembered and once reminded me. I have forgotten, too, how we grew up, and took orders, and went to our first Ayrshire parish, and fell in love with and married a daughter of Burns's Dr Smith—"Smith opens out his cauld harangues." I have forgotten, but I was there all the same, and heard stories of Burns at first hand.

And there is a thing stranger than all that; for this *homunculus* or part-man of mine that walked about the eighteenth century with Dr Balfour in his youth, was in the way of meeting other *homunculos* or part-men, in the persons of my other ancestors. These were of a lower order, and doubtless we looked down upon them duly. But as I went to college with Dr Balfour, I may have seen the lamp and oil man taking down the shutters from his shop beside

## THE MANSE

the Tron;—we may have had a rabbit-hutch or a book-shelf made for us by a certain carpenter in I know not what wynd of the old, smoky city; or, upon some holiday excursion, we may have looked into the windows of a cottage in a flower-garden and seen a certain weaver plying his shuttle. And these were all kinsmen of mine upon the other side; and from the eyes of the lamp and oil man one-half of my unborn father, and one-quarter of myself, looked out upon us as we went by to college. Nothing of all this would cross the mind of the young student, as he posted up the Bridges with trim, stockinged legs, in that city of cocked hats and good Scotch still unadulterated. It would not cross his mind that he should have a daughter; and the lamp and oil man, just then beginning, by a not unnatural metastasis, to bloom into a lighthouse-engineer, should have a grandson; and that these two, in the fulness of time, should wed; and some portion of that stu-

## THE HILLS OF HOME

dent himself should survive yet a year or two longer in the person of their child.

But our ancestral adventures are beyond even the arithmetic of fancy; and it is the chief recommendation of long pedigrees, that we can follow backward the careers of our *homunculos* and be reminded of our antenatal lives. Our conscious years are but a moment in the history of the elements that build us. Are you a bank-clerk, and do you live at Peckham? It was not always so. And though to-day I am only a man of letters, either tradition errs or I was present when there landed at St Andrews a French barber-surgeon, to tend the health and the beard of the great Cardinal Beaton; I have shaken a spear in the Debateable Land and shouted the slogan of the Elliots; I was present when a skipper, plying from Dundee, smuggled Jacobites to France after the '15; I was in a West India merchant's office, perhaps next door to Bailie Nicol Jarvie's, and managed the business of a plantation











## THE MANSE

in St Kitt's; I was with my engineer-grandfather (the son-in-law of the lamp and oil man) when he sailed north about Scotland on the famous cruise that gave us the *Pirate* and the *Lord of the Isles*; I was with him, too, on the Bell Rock, in the fog, when the *Smeaton* had drifted from her moorings, and the Aberdeen men, pick in hand, had seized upon the only boats, and he must stoop and lap sea-water before his tongue could utter audible words; and once more with him when the Bell Rock beacon took a "thrawe," and his workmen fled into the tower, then nearly finished, and he sat unmoved reading in his Bible—or affecting to read—till one after another slunk back with confusion of countenance to their engineer. Yes, parts of me have seen life, and met adventures, and sometimes met them well. And away in the still cloudier past, the threads that make me up can be traced by fancy into the bosoms of thousands and millions of ascendants: Picts who rallied

## THE HILLS OF HOME

round Macbeth and the old (and highly preferable) system of descent by females, fleers from before the legions of Agricola, marchers in Pannonian morasses, star-gazers on Chaldæan plateaus; and, furthest of all, what face is this that fancy can see peering through the disparted branches? What sleeper in green tree-tops, what muncher of nuts, concludes my pedigree? Probably arboreal in his habits. . . .

And I know not which is the more strange, that I should carry about with me some fibres of my minister-grandfather; or that in him, as he sat in his cool study, grave, reverend, contented gentleman, there was an aboriginal frisking of the blood that was not his; tree-top memories, like undeveloped negatives, lay dormant in his mind; tree-top instincts awoke and were trod down; and Probably Arboreal (scarce to be distinguished from a monkey) gambolled and chattered in the brain of the old divine.





PENTLAND ESSAY  
NUMBER FOUR



THE PENTLAND RISING    A PAGE  
OF HISTORY                      1666  
PENTLAND ESSAY NUMBER FOUR





# I THE CAUSES OF THE REVOLT



THE PENTLAND RISING A PAGE  
OF HISTORY 1666  
PENTLAND ESSAY NUMBER FOUR

I THE CAUSES OF THE REVOLT

**T**WO HUNDRED YEARS ago a tragedy was enacted in Scotland, the memory whereof has been in great measure

lost or obscured by the deep tragedies which followed it. It is, as it were, the evening of the night of persecution—a sort of twilight, dark indeed to us, but light as the noonday when compared with the midnight gloom which followed. This fact, of its being the very threshold of persecution, lends it, however, an additional interest.

The prejudices of the people against Episcopacy were “out of measure increased,” says Bishop Burnet, “by the new incumbents who were put in the place of the ejected preachers, and were generally very mean and despicable in all respects. They were the worst preachers I ever heard; they were ignorant to a re-

## THE HILLS OF HOME

proach; and many of them were openly vicious. They were indeed the dregs and refuse of the northern parts. Those of them who arose above contempt or scandal were men of such violent tempers that they were as much hated as the others were despised.\* It was little to be wondered at, from this account, that the country-folk refused to go to the parish church, and chose rather to listen to outed ministers in the fields. But this was not to be allowed, and their persecutors at last fell on the method of calling a roll of the parishioners' names every Sabbath, and marking a fine of twenty shillings Scots to the name of each absentee. In this way very large debts were incurred by persons altogether unable to pay. Besides this, landlords were fined for their tenants' absences, tenants for their landlords, masters for their servants, servants for their masters, even

\* *History of My Own Times*, beginning 1660, by Bishop Gilbert, p. 158.

## CAUSES OF THE REVOLT

though in their attendance they themselves were perfectly regular. And as the curates were allowed to fine with the sanction of any common soldier, it may be imagined that often the pretexts were neither very sufficient nor well proven.

When the fines could not be paid at once, Bibles, clothes, and household utensils were seized upon, or a number of soldiers, proportionate to his wealth, were quartered on the offender. The coarse and drunken privates filled the houses with woe; snatched the bread from the children to feed their dogs; shocked the principles, scorned the scruples, and blasphemed the religion of their humble hosts; and when they had reduced them to destitution, sold the furniture, and burned down the roof-tree which was consecrated to the peasants by the name of Home. For all this attention each of these soldiers received from his unwilling landlord a certain sum of money per day—three shillings sterling,

## THE HILLS OF HOME

according to "*Naphtali*." And frequently they were forced to payquartering money for more men than were in reality "cessed" on them. At that time it was no strange thing to behold a strong man begging for money to pay his fines, and many others who were deep in arrears, or who had attracted attention in some other way, were forced to flee from their homes, and take refuge from arrest and imprisonment among the wild mosses of the uplands.\*

One example in particular we may cite:

John Neilson, the Laird of Corsack, a worthy man, was, unfortunately for himself, a Nonconformist. First he was fined in four hundred pounds Scots, and then through cessing he lost nineteen hundred and ninety-three pounds Scots. He was next obliged to leave his house and flee from place to place, during which wanderings he lost his horse. His wife and children were turned out of doors, and then his

\*Wodrow's *Church History*, Book II. chap. i. sect. 1.

## CAUSES OF THE REVOLT

tenants were fined till they too were almost ruined. As a final stroke, they drove away all his cattle to Glasgow and sold them.\* Surely it was time that something were done to alleviate so much sorrow, to overthrow such tyranny.

About this time too there arrived in Galloway a person calling himself Captain Andrew Gray, and advising the people to revolt. He displayed some documents purporting to be from the northern Covenanters, and stating that they were prepared to join in any enterprise commenced by their southern brethren. The leader of the persecutors was Sir James Turner, an officer afterwards degraded for his share in the matter. "He was naturally fierce, but was mad when he was drunk, and that was very often," said Bishop Burnet. "He was a learned man, but had always been in armies, and knew no other rule but to obey orders. He told me he had no regard to any

\* Cruikshank's *Church History*, 1751, 2nd edit. p. 202.

## THE HILLS OF HOME

law, but acted, as he was commanded, in a military way."\*

This was the state of matters, when an outrage was committed which gave spirit and determination to the oppressed countrymen, lit the flame of insubordination, and for the time at least recoiled on those who perpetrated it with redoubled force.

\* Burnet, p. 348.







3. H. H. H. H.







I love no warres,  
I love no jarres,  
Nor strife's fire.  
May discord cease,  
Let's live in peace:  
This I desire.

If it must be  
Warre we must see  
(So fates conspire),  
May we not feel  
The force of steel:  
This I desire.

T. JACKSON, 1651.\*

\* Fuller's *Historie of the Holy Warre*, 4th edit. 1651.

UPON TUESDAY, NOV-  
ember 13th, 1666, Corporal  
George Deanes and three  
other soldiers set upon an old  
man in the clachan of Dalry and demanded  
the payment of his fines. On the old man's  
refusing to pay, they forced a large party of  
his neighbours to go with them and thresh  
his corn. The field was a certain distance out  
of the clachan, and four persons, disguised  
as countrymen, who had been out on the  
moors all night, met this mournful drove  
of slaves, compelled by the four soldiers  
to work for the ruin of their friend. How-  
ever, chilled to the bone by their night on  
the hills, and worn out by want of food,  
they proceeded to the village inn to re-  
fresh themselves. Suddenly some people  
rushed into the room where they were sit-  
ting, and told them that the soldiers were  
about to roast the old man, naked, on his  
own girdle. This was too much for them  
to stand, and they repaired immediately

## THE HILLS OF HOME

to the scene of this gross outrage, and at first merely requested that the captive should be released. On the refusal of the two soldiers who were in the front room, high words were given and taken on both sides, and the other two rushed forth from an adjoining chamber and made at the countrymen with drawn swords. One of the latter, John M'Lellan of Barskob, drew a pistol and shot the corporal in the body. The pieces of tobacco-pipe with which it was loaded, to the number of ten at least, entered him, and he was so much disturbed that he never appears to have recovered, for we find long afterwards a petition to the Privy Council requesting a pension for him. The other soldiers then laid down their arms, the old man was rescued, and the rebellion was commenced.\*

And now we must turn to Sir James Turner's memoirs of himself; for, strange to say, this extraordinary man was re-

\* Wodrow, vol. ii. p. 17.



## THE BEGINNING

markably fond of literary composition, and wrote, besides the amusing account of his own adventures just mentioned, a large number of essays and short biographies, and a work on war, entitled "*Pallas Armata*." The following are some of the shorter pieces: "Magick," "Friendship," "Imprisonment," "Anger," "Revenge," "Duells," "Cruelty," "A Defence of some of the Ceremonies of the English Liturgie—to wit—Bowling at the Name of Jesus, The frequent repetition of the Lord's Prayer and Good Lord deliver us, Of the Doxologie, Of Surplesses, Rotchets, Canonnicall Coats," etc. From what we know of his character we should expect "Anger" and "Cruelty" to be very full and instructive. But what earthly right he had to meddle with ecclesiastical subjects it is hard to see.

Upon the 12th of the month he had received some information concerning Gray's proceedings, but as it was excess-

## THE HILLS OF HOME

ively indefinite in its character, he paid no attention to it. On the evening of the 14th, Corporal Deanes was brought into Dumfries, who affirmed stoutly that he had been shot while refusing to sign the Covenant—a story rendered singularly unlikely by the after conduct of the rebels. Sir James instantly despatched orders to the cessed soldiers either to come to Dumfries or meet him on the way to Dalry, and commanded the thirteen or fourteen men in the town with him to come at nine next morning to his lodging for supplies.

On the morning of Thursday the rebels arrived at Dumfries with 50 horse and 150 foot. Nielson of Corsack, and Gray, who commanded, with a considerable troop, entered the town, and surrounded Sir James Turner's lodging. Though it was between eight and nine o'clock, that worthy, being unwell, was still in bed, but rose at once and went to the window.

## THE BEGINNING

Nielson and some others cried, "You may have fair quarter."

"I need no quarter," replied Sir James; "nor can I be a prisoner, seeing there is no war declared." On being told, however, that he must either be a prisoner or die, he came down, and went into the street in his night-shirt. Here Gray showed himself very desirous of killing him, but he was overruled by Corsack. However, he was taken away a prisoner, Captain Gray mounting him on his own horse, though, as Turner naïvely remarks, "there was good reason for it, for he mounted himself on a farre better one of mine." A large coffer containing his clothes and money, together with all his papers, were taken away by the rebels. They robbed Master Chalmers, the Episcopalian minister of Dumfries, of his horse, drank the King's health at the market cross, and then left Dumfries.\*

\* Sir J. Turner's *Memoirs*, pp. 148-50.



### III THE MARCH OF THE REBELS

“Stay, passenger, take notice what thou reads,  
At Edinburgh lie our bodies, here our heads;  
Our right hand stood at Lanark, these we want,  
Because with them we signed the Covenant.”

*Epitaph on a Tombstone at Hamilton.\**

\* *A Cloud of Witnesses*, p. 376.

### III THE MARCH OF THE REBELS

ON FRIDAY THE 16TH, Bailie Irvine of Dumfries came to the Council at Edinburgh, and gave information concerning this "horrid rebellion." In the absence of Rothes, Sharpe presided—much to the wrath of some members; and as he imagined his own safety endangered, his measures were most energetic. Dalzell was ordered away to the West, the guards round the city were doubled, officers and soldiers were forced to take the oath of allegiance, and all lodgers were commanded to give in their names. Sharpe, surrounded with all these guards and precautions, trembled—trembled as he trembled when the avengers of blood drew him from his chariot on Magus Muir,—for he knew how he had sold his trust, how he had betrayed his charge, and he felt that against him must their chiefest hatred be directed, against him their direst thunderbolts be forged. But even in his fear the apostate Presbyt-

## THE HILLS OF HOME

erian was unrelenting, unpityingly harsh; he published in his manifesto no promise of pardon, no inducement to submission. He said, "If you submit not you must die," but never added, "If you submit you may live!"\*

Meantime the insurgents proceeded on their way. At Carsphairn they were deserted by Captain Gray, who, doubtless in a fit of oblivion, neglected to leave behind him the coffer containing Sir James's money. Who he was is a mystery, unsolved by any historian; his papers were evidently forgeries—that, and his final flight, appears to indicate that he was an agent of the Royalists, for either the King or the Duke of York was heard to say, "That, if he might have his wish, he would have them all turn rebels and go to arms."†

Upon the 18th day of the month they left Carsphairn and marched onwards.

\* Wodrow, pp. 19, 20.

† *A Hind Let Loose*, p. 123.



## MARCH OF THE REBELS

Turner was always lodged by his captors at a good inn, frequently at the best of which their halting-place could boast. Here many visits were paid to him by the ministers and officers of the insurgent force. In his description of these interviews he displays a vein of satiric severity, admitting any kindness that was done to him with some qualifying souvenir of former harshness, and gloating over any injury, mistake, or folly, which it was his chance to suffer or to hear. He appears, notwithstanding all this, to have been on pretty good terms with his cruel "phanaticks," as the following extract sufficiently proves:

"Most of the foot were lodged about the church or churchyard, and order given to ring bells next morning for a sermon to be preached by Mr Welch. Maxwell of Morith, and Major M'Cullough invited me to heare "that phanatick sermon" (for soe they merrilie called it). They said that preaching might prove an effectual meane

## THE HILLS OF HOME

to turne me, which they heartilie wished. I answered to them that I was under guards, and that if they intended to heare that sermon, it was probable I might likewise, for it was not like my guards wold goe to church and leave me alone at my lodgeings. Bot to what they said of my conversion, I said it wold be hard to turne a Turner. Bot because I found them in a merrie humour, I said, if I did not come to heare Mr Welch preach, then they might fine me in fortie shillings Scots, which was double the sume of what I had exacted from the phanatics."\*

This took place at Ochiltree, on the 22nd day of the month. The following is recounted by this personage with malicious glee, and certainly, if authentic, it is a sad proof of how chaff is mixed with wheat, and how ignorant, almost impious, persons were engaged in this movement; nevertheless we give it, for we wish to present

\* Turner, p. 163.

## MARCH OF THE REBELS

with impartiality all the alleged facts to the reader:—

“Towards the evening Mr Robinsone and Mr Crukshank gaue me a visite; I called for some ale purposelie to heare one of them blesse it. It fell Mr Robinsone to seeke the blessing, who said one of the most bombastick graces that ever I heard in my life. He summoned God Allmightie very imperiouslie to be their secundarie (for that was his language). ‘And if,’ said he, ‘thou wilt not be our Secundarie, we will not fight for thee at all, for it is not our cause bot thy cause; and if thou wilt not fight for our cause and thy oun cause, then we are not obliged to fight for it. They say,’ said he, ‘that Dukes, Earles, and Lords are coming with the King’s General against us, bot they shall be nothing bot a threshing to us.’ This grace did more fullie satisfie me of the folly and injustice of their cause, then the ale did quench my thirst.”\*

## THE HILLS OF HOME

Frequently the rebels made a halt near some roadside alehouse, or in some convenient park, where Colonel Wallace, who had now taken the command, would review the horse and foot, during which time Turner was sent either into the alehouse or round the shoulder of the hill, to prevent him from seeing the disorders which were likely to arise. He was, at last, on the 25th day of the month, between Douglas and Lanark, permitted to behold their evolutions. "I found their horse did consist of four hundreth and fortie, and the foot of five hundreth and upwards. . . . The horsemen were armed for most part with suord and pistoll, some onlie with suord. The foot with musket, pike, sith (scythe), forke, and suord; and some with suords great and long." He admired much the proficiency of their cavalry, and marvelled how they had attained to it in so short a time.\*

\* Turner, p. 167.

## MARCH OF THE REBELS

At Douglas, which they had just left on the morning of this great wapinshaw, they were charged—an awful picture of depravity!—with the theft of a silver spoon and a nightgown. Could it be expected that while the whole country swarmed with robbers of every description, such a rare opportunity for plunder should be lost by rogues, that among a thousand men, even though fighting for religion, there should not be one Achan in the camp? At Lanark a declaration was drawn up and signed by the chief rebels. In it occurs the following:

“The just sense whereof”—the sufferings of the country—“made us choose, rather to betake ourselves to the fields for self-defence, than to stay at home, burdened daily with the calamities of others, and tortured with the fears of our own approaching misery.”\*

The whole body, too, swore the Coven-

\* Wodrow, p. 29.

## THE HILLS OF HOME

ant, to which ceremony the epitaph at the head of this chapter seems to refer.

A report that Dalzell was approaching drove them from Lanark to Bathgate, where, on the evening of Monday the 26th, the wearied army stopped. But at twelve o'clock the cry, which served them for a trumpet, of "Horse! horse!" and "Mount the prisoner!" resounded through the night-shrouded town, and called the peasants from their well-earned rest to toil onwards in their march. The wind howled fiercely over the moorland; a close, thick, wetting rain descended. Chilled to the bone, worn out with long fatigue, sinking to the knees in mire, onward they marched to destruction. One by one the weary peasants fell off from their ranks to sleep, and die in the rain-soaked moor, or to seek some house by the wayside wherein to hide till daybreak. One by one at first, then in gradually increasing numbers, at every shelter that was seen, whole troops left the

## MARCH OF THE REBELS

waning squadrons, and rushed to hide themselves from the ferocity of the tempest. To right and left nought could be descried but the broad expanse of the moor, and the figures of their fellow-rebels, seen dimly through the murky night, plodding onwards through the sinking moss. Those who kept together—a miserable few—often halted to rest themselves, and to allow their lagging comrades to overtake them. Then onward they went again, still hoping for assistance, reinforcement, and supplies; onward again, through the wind, and the rain, and the darkness—onward to their defeat at Pentland, and their scaffold at Edinburgh. It was calculated that they lost one half of their army on that disastrous night-march.

Next night they reached the village of Colinton, four miles from Edinburgh, where they halted for the last time.\*

\*Turner, Wodrow, and *Church History* by James Kirkton, an outed minister of the period.





•

•

“They cut his hands ere he was dead,  
And after that struck off his head.  
His blood under the altar cries  
For vengeance on Christ’s enemies.”

*Epitaph on Tomb at Longcross of Clermont.\**

\* *Cloud of Witnesses*, p. 389; Edin. 1765.

LATE ON THE FOURTH night of November, exactly twenty-four days before Rullion Green, Richard and George Chaplain, merchants in Haddington, beheld four men, clad like West-country Whigamores, standing round some object on the ground. It was at the two-mile cross, and within that distance from their homes. At last, to their horror, they discovered that the recumbent figure was a livid corpse, swathed in a blood-stained winding-sheet.\* Many thought that this apparition was a portent of the deaths connected with the Pentland Rising.

On the morning of Wednesday, the 28th of November 1666, they left Colinton and marched to Rullion Green. There they arrived about sunset. The position was a strong one. On the summit of a bare, heathery spur of the Pentlands are two hillocks, and between them lies a narrow

\* Kirkton, p. 244.

## THE HILLS OF HOME

band of flat marshy ground. On the highest of the two mounds—that nearest the Pentlands, and on the left hand of the main-body—was the greater part of the cavalry, under Major Learmont; on the other Barskob and the Galloway gentlemen; and in the centre Colonel Wallace and the weak, half-armed infantry. Their position was further strengthened by the depth of the valley below, and the deep chasm-like course of the Rullion Burn.

The sun, going down behind the Pentlands, cast golden lights and blue shadows on their snow-clad summits, slanted obliquely into the rich plain before them, bathing with rosy splendour the leafless, snow-sprinkled trees, and fading gradually into shadow in the distance. To the south, too, they beheld a deep-shaded amphitheatre of heather and bracken; the course of the Esk, near Penicuik, winding about at the foot of its gorge; the broad, brown expanse of Maw Moss; and, fading

## RULLION GREEN

into blue indistinctness in the south, the wild heath-clad Peeblesshire hills. In sooth, that scene was fair, and many a yearning glance was cast over that peaceful evening scene from the spot where the rebels awaited their defeat; and when the fight was over, many a noble fellow lifted his head from the blood-stained heather to strive with darkening eyeballs to behold that landscape, over which, as over his life and his cause, the shadows of night and of gloom were falling and thickening.

It was while waiting on this spot that the fear-inspiring cry was raised: "The enemy! Here come the enemy!"

Unwilling to believe their own doom—for our insurgents still hoped for success in some negotiations for peace which had been carried on at Colinton—they called out, "They are some other of our own."

"They are too blacke" (*i.e.* numerous), "fie! fie! for ground to draw up on," cried Wallace, fully realising the want of space

## THE HILLS OF HOME

for his men, and proving that it was not till after this time that his forces were finally arranged.”\*

First of all the battle was commenced by fifty Royalist horse sent obliquely across the hill to attack the left wing of the rebels. An equal number of Learmont's men met them, and, after a struggle, drove them back. The course of the Rullion Burn prevented almost all pursuit, and Wallace, on perceiving it, dispatched a body of foot to occupy both the burn and some ruined sheep-walls on the farther side.

Dalzell changed his position, and drew up his army at the foot of the hill, on the top of which were his foes. He then dispatched a mingled body of infantry and cavalry to attack Wallace's outpost, but they also were driven back. A third charge produced a still more disastrous effect, for Dalzell had to check the pursuit of his men by a reinforcement.

\* Kirkton.

## RULLION GREEN

These repeated checks bred a panic in the Lieutenant-General's ranks, for several of his men flung down their arms. Urged by such fatal symptoms, and by the approaching night, he deployed his men, and closed in overwhelming numbers on the centre and right flank of the insurgent army. In the increasing twilight the burning matches of the firelocks, shimmering on barrel, halbert, and cuirass, lent to the approaching army a picturesque effect, like a huge, many-armed giant breathing flame into the darkness.

Placed on an overhanging hill, Welch and Semple cried aloud, "The God of Jacob! The God of Jacob!" and prayed with uplifted hands for victory.\*

But still the Royalist troops closed in.

Captain John Paton was observed by Dalzell, who determined to capture him with his own hands. Accordingly he charged forward, presenting his pistols. Paton

\* Turner.

## THE HILLS OF HOME

fired, but the balls hopped off Dalzell's buff coat and fell into his boot. With the superstition peculiar to his age, the Non-conformist concluded that his adversary was rendered bullet-proof by enchantment, and, pulling some small silver coins from his pocket, charged his pistol therewith. Dalzell, seeing this, and supposing, it is likely, that Paton was putting in larger balls, hid behind his servant, who was killed.\*

Meantime the outposts were forced, and the army of Wallace was enveloped in the embrace of a hideous boa-constrictor—tightening, closing, crushing every semblance of life from the victim enclosed in his toils. The flanking parties of horse were forced in upon the centre, and though as even Turner grants, they fought with desperation, a general flight was the result.

But when they fell there was none to

\* Kirkton.



## RULLION GREEN

sing their coronach or wail the death-wail over them. Those who sacrificed themselves for the peace, the liberty, and the religion of their fellow-countrymen, lay bleaching in the field of death for long, and when at last they were buried by charity, the peasants dug up their bodies, desecrated their graves, and cast them once more upon the open heath for the sorry value of their winding-sheets!













THE PENTLANDS, NEAR DUNDEE, SCOTLAND

Painted by J. M. W. Turner, 1844





# RULLION GREEN

INSCRIPTION ON STONE AT RULLION GREEN:

Here  
and near to  
this Place lyes the  
Reuerend Mr John Crookshanks and Mr  
Andrew McCormock Ministers of the Gos-  
pel, and about Fifty other True Covenanted  
Presbyterians who were killed in this Place  
in their own Innocent Self Defence and  
Defence of the Covenanted Work of Re-  
formation by Thomas Dalzeel of Bins upon  
the 28 of November 1666. Rev. 12. 11.  
Erected Sept. 28, 1738.

## *Back of Stone:*

A Cloud of Witnesses ly here,  
Who for Christ's Interest did appear,  
For to restore true Liberty,  
O'eturnèd then by tyranny.  
And by proud Prelats who did Rage  
Against the Lord's own heritage.  
They sacrificed were for the laws  
Of Christ their king, his noble cause.  
These heroes fought with great renown  
By falling got the Martyr's crown.\*

\* Kirkton.

Halt, passenger; take heed what thou dost see,  
This tomb doth show for what some men did die."

*Monument, Greyfriars' Churchyard, Edinburgh,*  
1661-1668.\*

\**Theater of Mortality*, p. 10. Edin. 1713.

**M**ASTER ANDREW Murray, an outed minister, residing in the Potterrow, on the morning after the defeat, heard the sounds of cheering and the march of many feet beneath his window. He gazed out. With colours flying, and with music sounding, Dalzell, victorious, entered Edinburgh. But his banners were dyed in blood, and a band of prisoners were marched within his ranks. The old man knew it all. That martial and triumphant strain was the death-knell of his friends and of their cause, the rust-hued spots upon the flags were the tokens of their courage and their death, and the prisoners were the miserable remnant spared from death in battle to die upon the scaffold. Poor old man! he had outlived all joy. Had he lived longer he would have seen increasing torment and increasing woe; he would have seen the clouds, then but gathering in mist, cast a more than midnight darkness over his

## THE HILLS OF HOME

native hills, and have fallen a victim to those bloody persecutions which, later, sent their red memorials to the sea by many a burn. By a merciful Providence all this was spared to him—he fell beneath the first blow; and ere four days had passed since Rullion Green, the aged minister of God was gathered to his fathers.\*

When Sharpe first heard of the rebellion, he applied to Sir Alexander Ramsay, the Provost, for soldiers to guard his house. Disliking their occupation, the soldiers gave him an ugly time of it. All the night through they kept up a continuous series of “alarms and incursions,” “cries of ‘Stand!’ ‘Give fire!’” etc., which forced the prelate to flee to the Castle in the morning, hoping there to find the rest which was denied him at home.† Now, however, when all danger to himself was past, Sharpe came out in his true colours, and scant was the justice likely to be shown

\* Kirkton, p. 247.

† *Ibid.* p. 254.

## A RECORD OF BLOOD

to the foes of Scottish Episcopacy when the Primate was by. The prisoners were lodged in Haddo's Hole, a part of St Giles' Cathedral, where, by the kindness of Bishop Wishart, to his credit be it spoken they were amply supplied with food.\*

Some people urged, in the Council, that the promise of quarter which had been given on the field of battle should protect the lives of the miserable men. Sir John Gilmoure, the greatest lawyer, gave no opinion—certainly a suggestive circumstance—but Lord Lee declared that this would not interfere with their legal trial; "so to bloody executions they went."† To the number of thirty they were condemned and executed; while two of them, Hugh M'Kail, a young minister, and Nielson of Corsack, were tortured with the boots.

The goods of those who perished were confiscated, and their bodies were dismembered and distributed to different

\* Kirkton, p. 247.

† *Ibid.* pp. 247, 248.

## THE HILLS OF HOME

parts of the country; "the heads of Major M'Culloch and the two Gordons, it was resolved," says Kirkton, "should be pitched on the gate of Kirkcudbright; the two Hamiltons and Strong's head should be affixed at Hamilton, and Captain Arnot's sett on the Watter Gate at Edinburgh. The armes of all the ten, because they hade withuplifted hands renewed the Covenant at Lanark, were sent to the people of that town to expiate that crime, by placing these arms on the top of the prison."\* Among these was John Neilson, the Laird of Corsack, who saved Turner's life at Dumfries; in return for which service Sir James attempted, though without success, to get the poor man reprieved. One of the condemned died of his wounds between the day of condemnation and the day of execution. "None of them," says Kirkton, "would save their life by taking the declaration & renouncing the Covenant, though

\* Kirkton, p. 248.

## A RECORD OF BLOOD

it was offered to them. . . . But never men died in Scotland so much lamented by the people, not only spectators, but those in the country. When Knockbreck and his brother were turned over, they clasped each other in their arms, and so endured the pangs of death. When Humphrey Colquhoun died, he spoke not like an ordinary citizen, but like a heavenly minister, relating his comfortable Christian experiences, and called for his Bible, and laid it on his wounded arm, and read John iii. 8, and spoke upon it to the admiration of all. But most of all, when Mr M'Kail died, there was such lamentation as was never known in Scotland before; not one dry cheek upon all the street, or in all the numberless wind-ows in the mercate place."\*

The following passage from this speech speaks for itself and its author:

"Hereafter I will not talk with flesh and blood, nor think on the world's consol-

\* Kirkton, p. 249.

## THE HILLS OF HOME

ations. Farewell to all my friends, whose company hath been refreshful to me in my pilgrimage. I have done with the light of the sun and the moon; welcome eternal light, eternal life, everlasting love, everlasting praise, everlasting glory. Praise to Him that sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever! Bless the Lord, O my soul, that hath pardoned all my iniquities in the blood of His Son, and healed all my diseases. Bless Him, O all ye His angels that excel in strength, ye ministers of His that do His pleasure. Bless the Lord, O my soul!"\*

After having ascended the gallows ladder he again broke forth in the following words of touching eloquence: "And now I leave off to speak any more to creatures, and begin my intercourse with God, which shall never be broken off. Farewell father and mother, friends and relations! Farewell the world and all delights! Farewell

\**Naphtali*, p. 205; Glasgow, 1721.



## A RECORD OF BLOOD

meat and drink! Farewell sun, moon, and stars!—Welcome God and Father! Welcome sweet Jesus Christ, the Mediator of the new covenant! Welcome blessed Spirit of grace and God of all consolation! Welcome glory! Welcome eternal life! Welcome Death!”\*

At Glasgow, too, where some were executed, they caused the soldiers to beat the drums and blow the trumpets on their closing ears. Hideous refinement of revenge! Even the last words which drop from the lips of a dying man, words surely the most sincere and the most unbiassed which mortal mouth can utter, even these were looked upon as poisoned and as poisonous. “Drown their last accents,” was the cry, “lest they should lead the crowd to take their part, or at the least to mourn their doom!”† But, after all, perhaps it was more merciful than one would think—unintentionally so, of course; perhaps the

\* Wodrow, p. 59.

† Kirkton, p. 246.

## THE HILLS OF HOME

storm of harsh and fiercely jubilant noises, the clanging of trumpets, the rattling of drums, and the hootings and jeerings of an unfeeling mob, which were the last they heard on earth, might, when the mortal fight was over, when the river of death was passed, add tenfold sweetness to the hymning of the angels, tenfold peacefulness to the shores which they had reached.

Not content with the cruelty of these executions, some even of the peasantry, though these were confined to the shire of Mid-Lothian, pursued, captured, plundered, and murdered the miserable fugitives who fell in their way. One strange story have we of these times of blood and persecution: Kirkton the historian and popular tradition tell us alike of a flame which often would arise from the grave, in a moss near Carnwath, of some of those poor rebels: of how it crept along the ground; of how it covered the house of

## A RECORD OF BLOOD

their murderer; and of how it scared him with its lurid glare.

Hear Daniel Defoe:\*

“If the poor people were by these insupportable violences made desperate, and driven to all the extremities of a wild despair, who can justly reflect on them when they read in the word of God ‘That oppression makes a wise man mad’? And therefore were there no other original of the insurrection known by the name of the Rising of Pentland, it was nothing but what the intolerable oppressions of those times might have justified to all the world, nature having dictated to all people a right of defence when illegally and arbitrarily attacked in a manner not justifiable either by laws of nature, the laws of God, or the laws of the country.”

Bear this remonstrance of Defoe’s in mind, and though it is the fashion of the day to jeer and to mock, to execrate and

\* Defoe’s *History of the Church*.

## THE HILLS OF HOME

to condemn, the noble band of Covenanters—though the bitter laugh at their old-world religious views, the curl of the lip at their merits, and the chilling silence on their bravery and their determination, are but too rife through all society—becharitable to what was evil and honest to what was good about the Pentland insurgents, who fought for life and liberty, for country and religion, on the 28th of November 1666, now just two hundred years ago.

EDINBURGH, *28th Nov.* 1866.

“From Covenanters with uplifted hands,  
From Remonstrators with associate bands,  
Good Lord, deliver us!”

*Royalist Rhyme*, KIRKTON, p. 127.











LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 014 548 916 7

